

**WESLEYAN'S MAGAZINE OF POLITICAL, CRITICAL, AND CREATIVE THOUGHT**

# The Travel Issue

# INSIDE:



**Burma, Mexico, Cameroon,  
Feminism and West African Dance,  
The Sexual Politics of Meat, and more!**



**'I see,' says Need Blind**

At the start of the semester, the Office of Admissions sounded the trumpets to announce a record-breaking number of applications for the class of 2003. A front-page article in the *Argus* lauded the numbers as the early results of the Strategy for Wesleyan, a typically passive editorial told the administration—in so many words—to keep doing what it's been doing, and Director of Institutional Research John Pothier got the quotation of the week, "It's all gravy."

Which begs the question, "What flavor?" For generations now (or at least since we divested from South Africa), students at Wesleyan have complained that the student body's changing for the worse; somehow, there just never seems to be enough hippies, freaks, queers, minorities, and red-diapers activists coming in to keep life on campus interesting. Some have quietly pointed fingers at the hallowed halls of Admissions and whispered the name "Barbara-Jan Wilson." Others have chalked it up to the to the *zeitgeist*—the less-than-stimulating effects of, say, PlayStation, Jerry Springer, and Techno on today's generation of college-age kids. Still others have posited an invisible hand at work in the admissions process itself, something we didn't have a

name for until the Poison Ivy crusade popularized words like "marketing," and "target group."

One thing's for sure: as Admissions lets in more and more applicants Early Decision, it's going to be letting in less and less students who need financial aid. Why? Students who don't have a lot of money can't afford to commit to one school until they have a chance to compare financial aid offers. They especially can't commit to a school like Wesleyan that requires that you take out the maximum Stafford and Perkins loans before you get any real financial aid. The freeze on loan increases that the Trustees voted through last year amounts to a Band-Aid on a bullet wound; we provide so little assistance that many choose never to come here, and of those that do, many drop out or transfer because their aid level *decreases* year by year—this school has a harder time keeping financial aid students than minority faculty.

Which makes "Need Blind" a pretty shaky laurel at Wesleyan. We may be blind, but we're certainly not equal opportunity—not if our aid levels alienate poor applicants and our emphasis on Early Decision weeds them out.

BRIAN EDWARDS-TIEKERT

**ABOUT HERMES**

For nearly 25 years, *Hermes* has been starting trouble at Wesleyan. It was founded in 1975 by a group of student activists disgruntled with (among other things), Wesleyan's school newspaper, the *Argus*. In Greek mythology, it was Hermes, God of Mischief, who slew the hundred-eyed Argus. *Hermes* bore the distinction of being New England's longest-running progressive student publication until it stopped production for the '91-'92 academic year. Subsequently revived as monthly journal, *Hermes* isn't an *Argus* rival anymore—now we to provide a more political, critical, and creative approach issues on and off-campus.

We produce seven or eight issues per academic year, publishing material with a decidedly leftist slant. Anything's fair game; we publish investigative pieces, report on causes and issues that don't make it into the mainstream press, and serve as a forum for progressive and radical thought on campus. We aim to raise awareness, spark debate, politicize University life, and energize the student body.

Anyone is welcome to join. We are organized as a non-hierarchical collective and informal meetings every Wednesday at 9:30 upstairs in the WSA building (190 High St.). In addition to writers, we need people willing to proofread, edit, take photographs, and help with layout. We have no permanent positions and nobody is in charge; decisions are made by the entire staff. You can get in touch with us (860) 685-7195, email us at [hermes@mail.wesleyan.edu](mailto:hermes@mail.wesleyan.edu), or check out our web page at <http://www.wesleyan.edu/hermes>. And if you don't like what you read here, join us and write your own articles.

Cover Design by Danielle Anastasion

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| <b>Ben Oppenheim</b>         | Baghdad             |
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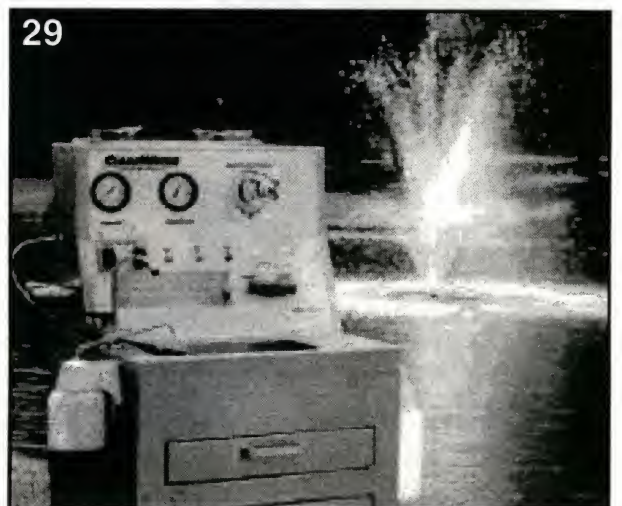
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# LETTERS

## STOP KILLING IRAQ

Bellflower, CA

Many Americans were outraged when President Clinton looked straight into the camera and with an air of complete sincerity lied about an affair with Monica Lewinsky. Some of these same Americans will applaud the attack on Iraq and accept as gospel truths the lies the government and media give them as reasons for the attack.

The attack on Iraq has nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction (several countries have them), violation of U.N. resolutions (Israel has violated many of them), Saddam Hussein being a brutal dictator (the United States brought Pinochet to power), democracy or human rights. It has everything to do with oil and the desire of the United States to weaken all independent-minded states in the region so that the large multinational oil companies can dominate the oil reserves of the Middle East. War also serves as a showcase for the new high technology weapons produced by military contractors. Some rationale must be given for the bloated military budgets and the tremendous government subsidy to high technology industry, which has sup-

ported the capitalist system since World War II. Since the Soviet Union dissolved, new enemies must be found or created.

The sanctions against Iraq have killed over two million Iraqis—five hundred thousand of them children. The use of depleted uranium in the Persian Gulf War has caused an alarming increase in cancers and other diseases in Iraq. I think it is very ironic and sad that conservative Republicans, who are always complaining about immorality and lack of family values, find nothing at all immoral about what has been done to the Iraqi people for the benefit of the oil companies.

For those who believe in the idea, repeated *ad nauseum* in the media, that the "Showdown with Saddam" is about weapons of mass destruction, I think these questions need to be asked:

Why during the Iran-Iraq war did the United States supply weapons to both sides and why did U.S. corporations supply Iraq with chemical and biological weapons?

Why were the Kurds urged to revolt against Saddam Hussein twice in the last thirty years and supplied with weapons by the CIA and then abandoned when it appeared they might be successful? Possibly to weaken Iraq?

Why was Saddam Hussein originally put in power by the CIA and why was he not removed at the end of the Persian Gulf War, when the United States had overwhelming military superiority?

The British and French colonialists drew the boundaries of the various countries in the Middle East so that no country would become too strong. That is why Kuwait cuts off Iraq's access to the sea. Are American imperialists simply too moral to follow the same policy of weakening troublesome countries? Give me a break!

GARY SUDBOROUGH

## IN SEARCH OF THE MAN

Seattle, WA

Noah Lansner's November *Hermes* article accusing Aongus Burke of being a sell-out reasserted the moralistic ranting of Livia Gershon's piece that began the whole sell-out debate in *Hermes* last year. But Noah failed to substantively address any of the arguments against his case.

Instead of refuting the strange and abstract sentiment that all corporations are evil, he restated it with the shaky justification that it is the unchangeable nature of all financial management, consulting, and corporate law companies to make rich people richer at the expense of poor people. Therefore, he concludes without exception that people who work for such companies are working to preserve economic injustice and have therefore sold out to "The Man."

But can he even prove that the one company he singles out in his attack, Merrill Lynch, is sufficiently complicit in activities that make poor people poor—that working for it is unethical? I'd be grateful if he could, and would suggest that such research be put directly into a boycott of its recruiting at all college campuses, starting with Wesleyan. Such a campaign could then expand to include other evil companies (surely there are plenty) eventually publicizing the dirty nature of the entire business that Noah so despises. Thousands of intelligent people could be saved from the ethical slaughterhouses of corporate America!

Alas, I doubt he can justify such an overarching claim. I doubt it because "corporation" is such a big word used to describe so many different activities, that I'm not sure what meaning it carries except for those self-righteous people (and I was one of them) who use it as a catch-all for "Evil Other," or more accurately, "not me." And, I am guessing that Noah singled out Merrill Lynch not because it has a well-documented history





of abuses familiar to many socially conscious people, but at random, as an example, good as any other, of a generalization about "corporations." Yet the example is so broad that its only real use is to make those people who already hate corporations reaffirm their shaky sense of radicalism.

This is not to say that Noah's (I hope he doesn't mind my not calling him Mr. Lansner—we are Hermes kin after all) intentions were off. Only that he and the rest of Hermes' contributors on the subject missed the opportunity to delve critically into the extremely important issue of how to think about right livelihood. The issue itself seems to me to get to the core of our identities: our definitions of the state of our communities and the planet, our personal identities as they relate to these definitions, and the means by which we act in relation to what we say we know.

Personally, I think there ARE organizations that we are ethically obliged not to work for and possibly even to fight against. This is not because they are corporations, whatever those are, but because they prop up dictators, expose their workers and neighbors to poisons, refuse to bargain in good faith with their employees, make weapons of mass destruction, turn a blind eye to torture, or otherwise deprive people of their lives or their dignity. These are claims that must be made about individual conduct, not assumed nature. The CIA, Shell Oil, and TOTAL come to mind most immediately as organizations that have earned the right to be called evil.

I do wish more creative and intelligent people would feel a stronger pull toward work which aims at something more than the most efficient way to make huge sums of money (also a generalization, I know, but a little less unfair I think than Noah's). Not because such work is inherently evil, but because there is more important community work (everything from political advocacy to social services to art to teaching) that is being marginalized in our society. Noam Chomsky is right: our civil society has been almost completely destroyed. There's more than enough rebuilding to do without the distraction of helping the well-to-do live their narcissistic lives. By emphasizing the importance of rebuilding our communi-

ties, we can avoid damning a part of our society which most of us are dependent upon—like it or not—while still refusing to be a part of it.

Furthermore, when we take people to task for working in commerce without demonizing their jobs, we avoid putting them in the defensive position (due only to those obviously enmeshed in evil) of having to either angrily justify themselves or, as Aongus Burke did, proudly proclaim and wallow in their selfishness (as a side note, the progressive cause could be greatly furthered if we all kept a strong eye toward keeping our friends from taking an excessive interest in the works of Ayn Rand or Freidrich Nietzsche). Instead, we can praise people for their kindness, intelligence, creativity, or whatever, and call on them to do something more worthwhile with their lives. We have plenty of people clamoring to make huge sums of money in business, becoming more selfish and cynical each year. Meanwhile, our communities suffer from a lack of leadership, creativity, and empowerment to address the serious problems they face. Our friends at top colleges, especially schools like Wesleyan, in which people are aware of so many of our world's problems, need to know that they are needed to take action, rather than just obliged to avoid something we tell them they should deem as evil.

But how they are needed, and where, and even what community work is, I can only speak vaguely about. We can teach and share our knowledge that social scientists are predicting massive famines, that scientists predict global warming and irreversible losses of biodiversity and ecosystem vitality if humans continue to live as they currently are. We can talk about economic injustice and changes in law that need to happen. But living is still a process of individual self-discovery, and enormous plans to totally save ourselves or define what must be done are more often used by insecure people to insult or claim control over others rather than to help others live more fulfilling lives.

So if our friends need to make big money for a few years to pay off loans or give them a sense of security before they do more socially important work, I don't think we have any grounds for telling them they shouldn't as long as they don't work for demonstrably evil companies, and as long as they make true on their words to eventually do something else. If anything, our true problem as it relates to right livelihood is not people who plan to help our communities, but those who know in their hearts that they should and yet do not. We need to find ways to inspire these people, which is a lot more difficult than simply criticizing them for doing what we dislike. TREVOR GRIFFEY





# SKELETON IN THE CLOSET

AONGUS BURKE

The grass is always greener, isn't it? When you're in college, it's easy to be jealous of those who are "real world" who don't have to constantly sweat over tests or papers. Once the work day is done, at least we have the entire evening to ourselves. Granted, life in the real world for Wesleyan graduates is probably less stressful than life at Wesleyan. Though some of my evenings and weekends are consumed with paying bills, doing dishes and cleaning my bathtub, I still have a lot more time to myself these days. So then why the hell have I been overloading myself with commitments lately?

I suppose the answer begins by looking at the time tradeoff one makes upon entering the workforce. Time is strikingly flexible when you're in college. You only have to be in class a few hours a day in college and, if you're not in the mood, you can just blow it off. You may have a part-time job or some extracurricular activities that take up a considerable amount of time, but odds are you still have plenty of hours every day where you don't have anywhere in particular to be. On the other hand, the work never really seems finished. There's always reading to catch up on, a paper around the corner, a final that will make you pay for the time you spent slacking off.

In the "real" world, things are a bit different. I know a preset number of hours each weekday are going to be devoted to work: waking up, getting dressed in suit and tie, taking the subway to work, working, taking the subway back home and changing my clothes. If I don't work any overtime, Aongus time begins on weekdays at about 6:30. I suppose I do have the whole weekend to myself, but then what happened to the four weeks I used to have off around Christmas?

Under the circumstances, those hours I have to myself become precious and I try to make as much of them as I possibly can. But time is money, and in a city like New York it's especially expensive.

Including overtime, I make around \$37,000 a year. It's not a bad salary for someone in his first year out of college. I take home about \$2,300 a month after taxes. As far as preset expenses go, I shell out \$660 a month to share a 2-bedroom apartment on West 104th Street. Believe it or not, this is actually a steal. I know a couple of 1998 Wes grads who are splitting \$1900 a month for a smaller place on East 6th Street. My neighborhood isn't as cool, but the extra \$300 a month cushions the blow.

Unfortunately, I don't really get to keep it, because I spend nearly that amount a month to pay off my college loans. Before college, everyone told me that loans would be a breeze to pay off, but I guess none of them went to colleges that make you take out the maximum Stafford and Perkins loans before dispensing any real aid. My first loan payment to the Stafford people was due on December 25th and it was for \$210.05. Merry Christmas! Just 119 payments to go, and I get to tack on monthly \$70 payments to the Perkins people come March.

Add on my utility, phone, cable and subway charges and I'm usually left with over \$1200 a month to feed, clothe and otherwise

entertain myself. This probably seems like a lot of money to live on. So how is it that I've stopped saving money since I moved out of my parents' house five months ago?

Because time really is money. Those few hours I have to myself each day are just too valuable to spend washing, ironing, and cooking. I just can't be bothered. At first this struck me as a snobby attitude; my dad thought so when I told him. Then it occurred to me that at least I was paying people to prepare my food and laundry; he had always just expected that his wife would do it. Unfortunately, my mother comes from a culture where those kinds of expectations are always met.

The Upper West Side of Manhattan is a long way from the fishing towns of Galway, Ireland. Still, it's funny to note how central bars are to both places. And, as many of you might have guessed, it's in bars and clubs that people like me end up burning a substantial amount of money. After many a night spent paying outrageous cover charges and buying enough liquid courage to talk to that cute boy . . . well, it's easy enough to see where that \$1200 goes.

Does this constitute a bad lifestyle? Hardly. After four years of Gadamerian hermeneutics, symbolic interactionism and multivariable calculus, a life filled with fine ethnic cuisine, recreational drugs and casual sex doesn't seem so bad. Indeed, I have some friends who I think can find this life fulfilling indefinitely. They know how to spend money. They can go to a fancy restaurant, pick the right entree and wine and fully appreciate the experience. They can take advantage of all of the cultural opportunities a city like New York has to offer. And they know people in so many cities that when the need to get away strikes they can make the most of it. But for me and for a lot of others I think, this way of living gets real old real fast.

The first few months I was at work, I'd often go out and catch up with an old friend over dinner. I'd tell him about work, or about moving into my new place, or whatever else was new in my life. But it became harder to make conversation with each subsequent dinner. There isn't much new and exciting going on in the workplace. So what else am I going to talk about? My adventures barhopping on Saturday nights?

Sooner or later you have to reassess the way you spend your time. You have to add something that will at least make you an interesting person again. You could take up a hobby, do some volunteer work or just read a little bit more. I'd think less of my friends who are taking night classes if I weren't still writing for *Hermes*.

It's easy to be nostalgic. But though you may spend all your time in college working or worrying about work, at least it's work that is generally challenging and stimulating, not brainless and mind-numbing. Maybe that's why doing your own laundry or cooking for yourself while you're at school isn't such a drag. But in the real world, those kinds of tasks become real nuisances, not merely pleasant breathers that prevent intellectual overload.

Maybe that's why you have to pay to go to college. ☹



# HERMES INDEX

(With apologies to *Harper's Magazine*)

1. Percentage of the world's goods and services the richest one-fifth of the world's population consumes: 86
2. Percentage that the poorest one-fifth consumes: 1.3
3. Amount spent on pizza delivery to the White House in a typical three-day period: \$550.
4. In the three days after the Lewinsky story broke in January 1998: \$2600
5. Between the 15-17 of December of 1998 (the beginnings of the impeachment process): \$3100
6. Number of U.S. residents whose drinking water is contaminated by poisons leaking from the Moab UT uranium waste dump: 20 million
7. Percentage of the country's population 20 million is: 7
8. Annual increase in native-born U.S. population: 0.6%
9. Annual increase in immigrant population: 4%
10. Increase in immigrant population since 1970: 170%
11. Poverty rate of immigrants compared to that of native-born: 50% higher
12. Percent of immigrants who lack a high school degree: 31%
13. Percent of native-born who lack a high school degree: 9%
14. Percent of native born who work in jobs with large numbers of immigrants: 26%
15. Percent of children 5-17 with an immigrant mother: 15%
16. Dollars given in PAC, soft money, and individual contributions by computer companies to federal candidates and parties during the 1997-98 elections: 8.1 million
17. Percent increase 8.1 million is over the last mid-term election contributions: 100
18. Percentage of this money given to Republicans: 57
19. Amount given by Microsoft, the top contributor: \$1.2
20. Percentage of Microsoft's money given to Republicans: 63
21. Amount given by Gateway, the second largest contributor: \$491,000
22. Percentage of Gateway's money given to Republicans: 69
23. Amount given to Oracle: \$325,000
24. Percentage of Oracle's money given to Democrats: 71%
25. Average Yearly Earnings of a Wesleyan food service worker: \$15,000

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Sources: 1-2: *UN Human Development Report*; 3-5: *Washington POST*, December 19, 1998, 6-7: *Project on Government Oversight*; 8-15: *Center for Immigration Studies*; 16-24: *Center for Responsive Politics*; 25: *Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees Union (HERE) Local 217*



# CONTRACT'S UP!

## INTERVIEW WITH A WESLEYAN FOOD SERVICE WORKER

**By Karen Weingarten**

*Wesleyan food service workers are members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE), Local 217. On February 28, 1999, their union contract will expire. Wesleyan union members are presently negotiating a new contract with Aramark. Erin Peterson works at Summerfields and the Campus Center Cafe and is also on the negotiating committee. In the following interview Erin explains some of the major issues of the campaign. Students who are interested in lending their support should look out for USLAC actions taking place this month.*

**Karen:** Erin, how long have you worked at Wesleyan, and when did the union form?

**Erin:** I've worked here 10 years, and the union was formed back in the early 80s. I really admire and respect the workers who formed the union. I know the importance of a union. My mother was a teacher and she always told me that you never cross the picket line. With the power of collective bargaining you're able to receive benefits you wouldn't receive as an individual. A union means you can say, "I won't work for six dollars an hour."

**Karen:** How has being in the union affected your job?

**Erin:** I can make a change in my life. Every three years when the contract expires we have the opportunity to negotiate with the company for all the workers, to ensure that we have job security, respect, a living wage and benefits. When workers believe the contract is being violated they have the opportunity to use the grievance procedure. On non-union worksites workers don't have that recourse.

**Karen:** What are the major issues in these negotiations?

**Erin:** We have four major goals: more 40 hour jobs, continued quality health care, an improved pension plan, and community standards.

**Karen:** Can you explain the 40-hour work week?

**Erin:** It is important to realize that when you take the overall income of a food service worker and compare it to the cost of living in New England, it lies within the low-income to poverty range. For example, my income in 1998 was a total of \$20,000. This is a significant increase for me, because the previous year I

worked 26.5 hours, and my income was about \$16,000. Looking at these numbers, it's obvious we need more 40 hour jobs and wage increases in this contract.

**Karen:** And what are the concerns surrounding health benefits?

**Erin:** Our union and other unions will be working with Aramark to hopefully get many Connecticut cafeteria workers under the same health care plan. The more workers that are under one plan, the better the plan becomes.

**Karen:** How about the issue of the pension?

**Erin:** Social Security benefits are not enough to live on. It is vital that employees have an adequate pension as well. And the pension should be enough so that they do not live in poverty. We need a better pension than the one we have now. I should not have to work until I am 80 to feed myself.

**Karen:** What do you mean by community standards?

**Erin:** Many workers here are part of the Middletown community and want very much to be recognized as part of the Wesleyan community as well. Specifically we would like tuition benefits similar to those received by the clerical workers and

Photo: Karen Weingarten



Erin Peterson on top of the Campus Center

Physical Plant workers.

**Karen:** How can students assist with contract negotiations?

**Erin:** Students should remember that they have a very powerful voice. When the students mobilize the administration takes action. Since the administration hires Aramark to run the food service, Wesleyan ultimately has the power to ensure a fair contract is reached. It is important for students to recognize that when their college years are over, we're still here.



# DEPRESSION NATION

PROZAC BLINDS US TO SOCIETY'S DISEASES

by Laura Clawson

How many of you are on anti-depressants? It's an alluring choice; not to be too confessional about this, but I once went so far as to call student mental health, thinking I could use some legal chemical help. Then I remembered that not only would I rather trust myself to a trained monkey than to student mental health, but that an untrained one would also be preferable. More importantly, I remembered all the reasons I was ambivalent about anti-depressants, the reasons I had delayed that call for a while.

Depression can be a crippling illness.

**PROZAC**  
fluoxetine hydrochloride

Not for a moment do I want to underestimate or deny that. Severe depression always devastates and sometimes ends lives, and I support any weapon that can be brought to bear against it. The fact that anti-depressants like prozac, zoloft, and wellbutrin have legitimate uses, though, does not mean they are not mis- or overused. And the fact that overprescription of prozac hasn't led to floods, earthquakes, or tabloid-worthy perversions doesn't mean it doesn't have serious consequences.

If we tell everyone who is unhappy that the answer to their problems lies in a medication, that their problems are, in fact, physical or chemical, we imply that the world they live in is not at fault. We individualize problems that are structural and collective, thereby absolving ourselves of the responsibility to change things. If we diagnose children's misbehavior in school as attention deficit disorder, we don't have to think about poverty

or our national underinvestment in education. If we understand adult dissatisfaction, even misery, as illness, we don't have to think about jobs that don't pay a living wage, are insecure, or lead nowhere. We don't have to think about anything. We just have to say "prozac."

I saw a talk show once that dealt with depression; it might have been Oprah. Anyway, it started off well. There were guests who had suffered serious depressions and a mental health professional and it very effectively made the point that depression is an illness that must be taken seriously. Then the talk-show host administered her audience a little quiz to determine if they were depressed. By the standards of the quiz, a stunning number of them

were. The audience members chosen to be interviewed were a long-married couple (the man had recently retired) who had both realized that they were depressed. The woman was unhappy—women, we learned, experience depression as unhappiness. The man was not unhappy, but he was sleeping a lot and feeling uncommunicative—men do not experience depression as unhappiness because they aren't in touch with their emotions; rather, they have symptoms like these. Neither had realized they were depressed or noticed that the other was. As they were interviewed, they began arguing about who was more depressed.

Nobody—not the talk show host, not the guest shrink—suggested that maybe they should examine their marriage or their lives more broadly. Was I the only person who thought that maybe the fact that nei-

**Anti-depressants are like a doctor's note excusing us, as a society, from responsibility for our problems.**

ther expressed concern for a spouse claiming to be seriously depressed and, indeed, each downplayed the spouse's claim in favor of his or her own was a sign of a troubled relationship? Perhaps the man's retirement was a factor? Clearly not, though: the guest shrink said it was a sickness.

Anti-depressants are like a doctor's note excusing us, as a society, from responsibility for our problems. I'm certainly not arguing that we should tell people who are depressed because they have no leisure time as a result of working two jobs in a futile attempt to pay the bills and whose children are being inadequately educated

that prozac is just a way of evading responsibility and that they should really change their lives so they're not depressed anymore. They need the prozac, so give it to them, but also give them a law requiring that all jobs pay a living wage and offer vacation time. Give them state-supported childcare and good schools. Admit that while anti-depressants are a godsend for the seriously depressed, they are often used to label societal problems as individual ones and to make lives bearable rather

than full. And for god's sake, DO something about it. ☹

**If we tell everyone who is unhappy that the answer to their problems lies in a medication, that their problems are physical or chemical, we imply that the world they live in is not at fault.**



# SHOUTcast

## ELECTRONIC ANARCHY HITS THE RECORD LABELS

By Andrew Tipson

I'm listening to Bill Hicks—one of the bravest and most innovative comedians out there. Unfortunately, he's been dead for a few years now, and the few CD recordings of his live performances are hard to come by. But someone out there is broadcasting his work again, out onto the Internet for anyone to hear for free. The quality is as good as radio (and without static), and I can even ask the DJ to cue up my favorite bit from "Rant in E Minor." Illegal? Maybe...revolutionary? Definitely. As internet radio sites go up all over the Net, the music industry as we know it may already be finished.

This all happened just a few weeks ago, when Nullsoft, the makers of the popular MP3 player WINamp, released SHOUTcast. SHOUTcast is, very simply, a free program that allows anyone with a computer and an internet connection to broadcast MP3 music in real-time. MP3s are simply near-CD-quality music files that take up very little space—roughly a tenth of regular CD audio (several new formats can do even better).

This compression makes transmitting music across the internet plausible—streaming from one computer to as many more as bandwidth will allow. While similar compression programs have existed for some time, none have been this free (\$0 is about as good as it gets), this easy to use, or backed by a huge net community with a dedicated libertarian bent.

Conventional commercial radio currently works on the premise of supplying millions of listeners from a single source. This model has always seemed like a pretty good deal, because after all, broadcasting, especially of copyrighted music, is costly. Only large corporations with advertising support can afford to rent out music from record companies and secure a pricey FCC license. The end result is that anyone with a radio can tune in for free, in return for being subjected to advertising for about 10% of the time.

Not a bad deal.

But there are some nasty problems that come with this system. Advertising markets are generally bad news when it comes to qualitative things like art and news. They tend to encourage a focus on a single demographic's taste. This limited range tends to become omnipresent, to the exclusion of lesser known artists and differing viewpoints. The result is that too many people don't even realize that there's anything else out there—they form their music preferences out of a severely limited spectrum. It's a sort of natural selection at work—only the measure for success has virtually nothing to do with the music itself, just its capacity to sell unrelated products.

It's even worse for minority-themed broadcasting. Advertisers have recently admitted to setting "dictates" against selling ads to stations that reach largely African-American or Latino audiences, depriving them of crucial programming funding. The advertising industry's favorite internal slogan, recently admitted to publicly, is "give us prospects, not suspects." (As Bill Hicks used to say, "Hey any here tonight in advertising or marketing? Really? Kill yourself!")

Worst of all, thanks to deregulation, the ownership of radio stations is falling into fewer and fewer hands. And since it's cheaper to simply re-use content across every station one owns, radio content tends to homogenize. Rogue micro-broadcasters trying to buck this trend have been hunted down and usually squashed, even though their small-time, short-range operations don't actually interfere with commercial radio. Something about creative one-man operations, usually with progressive, anti-corporate politics, seem to bother the FCC

(which often seems to act like a puppet of the very corporations it's supposed to be regulating). I can't imagine why either. Maybe all those masturbation jokes in *Pump Up the Volume* struck a nerve.

Anyway, SHOUTcast is designed to escape all this nonsense. Instead of a few huge corporate stations, SHOUTcast envisions thousands of tiny internet radio broadcasts, each specializing in its own diverse taste. With a recently released program called MP3spy, anyone can search through a constantly updated list of hundreds of online stations and their descriptions. And because (at least for the time being) only tens of people can connect to any one server at a time, interactivity with the DJ is maximized.

Because it's as good as free and impossible to regulate, this model of mass music distribution is virtually unstoppable. Junior economists will of course insist that nothing is free, but consider this—in the next few years most Americans

**Forget corporate radio, SHOUTcast envisions thousands of tiny internet radio broadcasts, each specializing in its own diverse taste.**

will already own or have access to a personal computer with an ASDL (or better) net connection. These computers spend most of their time and net bandwidth sitting idle, so running a radio server set to automatically broadcast a CD or MP3 tracks stored on hard-drive wouldn't even noticeably alter regular operation. All costs are already covered by the natural upkeep of the computer. Of course, someone could sell ad space on a popular site, but the point is they wouldn't really have to (it's also unlikely that advertisers would make much money buying ad time for such small audiences—not to mention that the MP3 community is rabidly anti-advertising). Labor costs? After initially setting up the server (which takes about ten minutes) it can virtually run itself—playing through set lists of songs auto-



matically. DJ-wannabe's can interject commentary if they want, and there's even a couple full-blown radio talk shows running out there. But even for the more professional jobs, everything I've seen so far involves people who enjoy doing this immensely and believe in sharing music.

Let's recap. 1) The software costs nothing. 2) The music is whatever music you already own, borrow, or even make yourself. And 3) as soon as your station goes up, it can be publicly listed and even searched for via artist, taste, and genre on freeware browsers like MP3spy. You can talk with connected listeners, take their requests, and even search out new music for your broadcast. Instead of a few huge, monolithic broadcasts, beamed into millions of isolated homes, imagine tiny interactive communities all across the world. Does traditional radio even deserve to survive?

### Legality

Oh yeah...reality. The fact of the matter is that despite great potential, MP3 and Internet radio face an uphill battle for acceptance. Sticky legal and moral issues as well as billions of dollars worth of vested interests may stifle the freeware radio scene.

The bottom line is that there is no way to outlaw the production or use of MP3s. Anything you do to music in your own home is your own business-protected by "fair use" policy. Where the issue gets really murky is in the transmission of said music to others, and whether or not said music is actually copyrighted. For awhile, it looked as if, for all practical purposes, copying and trading of music it was okay as long as no money changed hands. I mean, how many cease and desist orders have you received for making tape mixes for your friends? Making MP3 mixes and sending them over the internet, however, is a little more frightening for the music industry because a single MP3 can be copied and distributed to hundreds of strangers within minutes. This sort of illegal distribution of copyrighted music isn't likely to last in anything but a covert capacity. Live bootlegs, however, are fair game, as is any music that artists choose

to release for free. (Though it's not always as easy as that—several artists, from Public Enemy to Billy Idol, have attempted to do just this, but their labels, against the artists' wishes, pulled the songs off their respective sites).

A similar hazy area exists for MP3 radio: Is it legal for you to play a copyrighted song to a friend over the telephone? Probably not technically, but no one will ever be prosecuted for it. But isn't that basically the same thing as streaming the audio into their computer? Yes, but again, it's much scarier for the music industry because it has the potential to reach so many people so quickly.

The simple argument of the industry is that passing around free copies of music will hurt album sales. Maybe, but then again it may also bolster them—the same way a hit radio singles can push unknown artists into the stratosphere. It's unlikely that people will switch entirely over to using free MP3's anyway—there's still something more satisfying about buying

physical copies of albums. But the industry also seems unable to even conceive of the possibility that lower album sales may be because their big ticket artists have been putting out trend-following, unambitious music that people are getting sick of. Noooo.... It's got to be bad marketing.... it's got to be those damn tape traders....

While the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) has already responded by cracking down


on a few major MP3 servers, the pirates keep popping back up almost as fast. And so far no action has been taken against internet radio stations. But, let's assume that the RIAA is able to quash the transfer of any copyrighted material over the internet. And let's assume that they succeed in pushing similar formats like Liquid Audio and AT&T's A2b which are encoded with special keys to prevent copying, experimentation, and distribution— all done "in the interest of the consumer." (Of course, it can be argued that all these formats really have to offer is less freedom, enforcing the usual centralized distribution control of music.)

Is this the end of MP3 trading and private Internet radio? Not by a long-shot.

***Because it's as good as free and impossible to regulate, this model of mass music distribution is virtually unstoppable.***

At the very least, artists not associated with labels will always find the medium of free distribution tempting. And anyway, the ultimate end of privately distributed internet radio is privately created content—true music for the masses. The whole idea of such populism is to wean people off corporate schlock, not promote it further. So, if the MP3 net community has come to any one conclusion, it's that pirate distribution will only hurt their cause. Most sites therefore limit themselves to "legal" free music—that which artists have okayed for either distribution or even copying (just not, and never, ever re-selling). And with digital watermark technologies starting to be put in place, MP3s will inevitably become safe for even the most tight-fisted.

So what really frightens the music industry isn't that free small timers will drive the industry's pay-by-play services out of business, but that big name artists will realize that they don't need their labels anymore. Most of the cost in the music industry is distribution—advertising, promotion to CD stores, marketing concepts, and actual mass-pressing of CDs and tapes. Artists who opt for online distribution, however, eliminate almost all of this overhead,—since they can release anything they want at any time. No pushy labels, no constraints on their artistic vision. Every cent they make they keep. The system for doing so, DAM, already exists. Of course it's hard to see most big-ticket artists backing away from their labels entirely, but there are definite innovators out there—David Bowie, for one:

"A few days ago a kid downloaded one of my songs from my Web site. He re-recorded it at home, changing the bits that he didn't like and then put up his version on his own site. The new version is written his way, with changes to the melodies and some of the lyrics and it is available as an MP3. It is unbelievable. If he can do that, imagine what can happen in the future," Bowie said. "Of course, a lot of artists are absolutely terrified by the idea, but I love it because I love process. To me, the end result is not nearly as interesting as the process of getting involved in something." 



# DARE WE BE SO MODEST?

## WEST AFRICAN DANCE AND THE POLITICS OF SEXY

**By Daniele Anastasion**

"Show it. Don't hide it. If you hide it, you are a hypocrite. If you hide it, there is something wrong. If you don't feel sexy, you are a dead person. My students, they write me and say, 'Thank you very much. When I finish with your class, my boyfriend love me more.'" The class blushes and giggles—a typical reaction to Helen Mensah, Wesleyan's professor of West African dance. "If you are a lesbian, I don't care. Just act like a woman. If you are a lesbian, do you not make LOVE? All you girls are having sex but you won't act sexy. It is hypocrites. Why you holding yourself like, eh, you don't exist in dis world at all?"

Grandma, as Helen Mensah would rather be called, begins a one-woman parade around the room, chanting, "FEEL se-XY. Whatever you are FEEL se-XY." We stand drenched in sweat, our mouths gaping at this sixty-two-year-old woman who has begun to dance in a way that would make most of our fathers blush. Hands behind her head, she curls her lip and thrusts her pelvis forward in a triumphant, unselfconscious display of her own sexuality. Grandma is by far the sex-

iest woman this campus has ever known.

The feminist's harem, Helen Mensah's West African Dance classes attract women who, much like myself, have been seduced by images of the African dancer as uninhibited woman. America has been fascinated by the eroticism of the African Dance since the appearance of Josephine Baker in the early twenties. While the charm and sexual energy of the dancing Negress once aroused the American male, the modern woman has reclaimed and successfully incorporated this imagery into a new feminist conception of the free, licentious woman. Imbued with a whole new set of meanings, the African dance has become a wonderful companion to the Sexual Revolution—an ideal vehicle for the American woman to release repressed sexual impulses.

However, the new values ascribed to the African woman and her dance are often skewed misrepresentations of the reality of the dance and its meaning. Feminists flock to Mensah's classes in order to assert one aspect of

feminism, namely the rejection of America's puritanical sexual mores. Yet in doing so, they ignore the reality that this display of sexuality is embedded in the traditional gender roles of a patriarchal society. Traditional dances depict women falling into the laps of men or male suitors spanking them with horse tails. If the truth be told, the value of the female dancer is determined by her physical appearance and her appeal to others—Wesleyan feminists are often dismayed when Grandma insists that they shave their legs and underarms before performances. Yet students, thrilled by the idea that this sexuality is safely commissioned by academia, conveniently regard these aspects of West African dance as flaws in Mensah's

feminist logic.

As is so common in the global community, symbols, traditions and meanings like the African dance are cheaply marketed and confused by popular culture. As Mensah states, "When we teach the dances, the Americans want to own it. They want to own the thing, so they change it." Foreign traditions and experiences have increasingly become like commodities for the American public and are accordingly manipulated for the American appetite. Isolated impressions of ethnic practices often merge with previously existing American values, resulting in grossly watered-down versions of rituals taken out of traditional contexts. As is the case with Mensah's classes, what has occurred is a basic misunderstanding of the ideology of the dance when met with American expectations. One would expect Grandma to be a licentious woman after all of her show in the classroom. However, when she has finished with all the looseness and perversity of the dance,

**A feminist's harem, Helen Mensah's West African Dance classes attract women who have been seduced by images of the African dancer as uninhibited woman.**



Helen Mensah's Group in Ghana



Grandma exhibits a dignity and reserve that is typically found among the most conservative of women. One day, after a class in which Grandma pointed to her crotch throughout the dance, she proceeded to scold a student who was stretching, telling her to sit like a lady. One can't help but notice the irony, the seeming contradictions that we observe in this woman's thought and behavior. However, such confusion results less from inconsistency on her part and more from our own inability to see where this woman is coming from.

Sexuality may be permissible in traditional dances, but there are definite rules that apply to the woman's sexuality outside of the dance in Ghana. The daughter of a magistrate with several wives, life was limited for Grandma as a young woman in Ghana. Polygamy was a huge aspect of life in Ghanaian society, but it only went one way, being of little benefit to the woman. "When I was young, I come from de poorest fahmily. My fahdah having plenty of women and children and taking care of them all. If your mother don't struggle and go to farm, or sell something, you don't have three yards of material to sew something to wear. It was hard times. Africa in dose days, our parents believe dat, if you are a woman you become a housewife, so they don't really pay attention for us to go to school. Instead, they would let all the guys in the house go to school, and we, the women, would help our parents to raise them." Left with very few alternatives other than a traditional marriage, Helen Mensah started to dance. At seventeen, she began to participate in Hi-Life competitions. Spotted one night at a Hi-Life club by a Haitian drama professor from the University of Legon in Ghana, she was invited to participate in his drama program there. It was there that she learned traditional dances from a Nigerian man.

"A German professor said to me, 'The way you dance, your structure—you have a beautiful figure. I am going to open a school. I would like for you to join dis school cause you look good in dis school.'

I didn't think I could do it, but dis man here, he really push me."

Grandma joined a traditional dance company, performing for years until she was asked to begin producing shows and teaching groups of her own. It was then that she began travelling to villages in

order to study the traditional dances that she would later bring to the stage. It was during one of these performances that a man witnessed her teaching ability. "Dis man, he followed me to my office and then he ask me, 'whats your name?' He said, 'I like the way you control.' He said, 'can you do

dat in my school?' I said, 'Where?' He said, 'In America.' America? I did not want to go to America. I did not want to leave my children. I wasn't going to come, but my friends said, 'go.' My husband, he asked, 'How much they going to pay you?' I said ten thousand. He said, 'I'll pay you ten thousand not to go.' Then I decided, hee hee, I'm going."

In 1973 Grandma came to America. She taught at the University of Houston for two years until her contract expired, and then she went to Rockport to join her original teachers, Mr. Opoku and Mr. Nketia. In 1979, she went back to Ghana for the first time in order to bring her children to America. Mensah and her children remained in Houston until 1994, when she finally made her debut as the sexiest woman at Wesleyan.

One thinks back to the moment that Grandma was first spotted at that Hi-Life club, and must connect the fact that it was not only her dancing ability, but also her beauty and physical appeal that

ultimately got her to where she is today. Many a modern feminist might be uncomfortable with this fact, the tyranny of beauty being uncomfortable terrain for her. One is reminded of the sexless feminist who disassociates herself from her womanhood, or the girl who shaves her head in sheer protest of vanity and beauty, for fear that it might separate her from the male dominated world. As Mensah has pointed out to us, there is something hypocritical in this disassociation—one that prevents the woman from coming to terms with a crucial aspect of her sexual being.

Although the African dance has been revealed to be fundamentally conservative, liberal Wesleyan feminists need not think that it won't teach them a thing or two. Helen Mensah's classes, whether they like it or not, demand that women face up to some conflicts in their own feminist ideologies. After all, what offends Grandma the most, isn't daring to show your sexuality, but, rather, daring to be modest. 🌹



Helen Mensah, the sexiest woman at Wesleyan

**As is so common in the global community, symbols, traditions and meanings like the African dance are cheaply marketed and confused by popular culture.**



# MEAT IS THE MAN

## A FEMINIST ARGUMENT FOR VEGETARIANISM

By Evan Leonard

For most families, Thanksgiving is not complete without a turkey. Sticking to tradition, mom and the other women in the family labor in the kitchen while the men find something else to do. After cooking all day, they serve the meal and something quite peculiar happens. Only the patriarch, or father figure, who usually takes his throne at the end of the table, is allowed to cut and serve the turkey. Now, mom just spent however long it took to thaw, baste, stuff, and cook the turkey, along with the "side dishes" of vegetable and complex carbohydrates, but the man of the house is the one who holds the knife. He does not serve the vegetables, he does not pass out the cranberry sauce, he cuts the turkey. Why?

I find cultural moments like Thanksgiving useful for just understanding our gendered relationship to meat. Suffice it to say that in America the man cuts the turkey and has control over the distribution of the meat because meat is for men. Within a fixed gender system, meat recurs as a male symbol of oppression and power



### Gender, Hunting and Animal Rights

During this past summer in Arkansas, two boys donned hunting caps and hunting rifles their father had bought them, and waited for their classmates to get out of school. They were supposedly hunting for one of the boys' past girlfriends, whom he later claimed he "wanted to hunt and kill." The boys opened fire on their classmates. Perhaps it is a coincidence that these two boys aimed only for the girls in the class, injuring two and killing four, or perhaps the boys were taught by their father that there is some connection to women and nonhuman animals which easily allows both women and animals to be seen as objects of sport. The issue surrounding this incident, which was only one of many teenage shootings this year, became parenting and guns in school, not the possible connection that men are encouraged to hunt prey both for sex and for sport.

Thinking of a predator killing a large mammal yields manly images of ferociousness, territorial imperative, armed hunting, aggressive behavior, the vitality and virility of meat eating. Furthermore, carnivorous predators such as the "masculine" wolf, panther and lion, provide both a paradigm for male sexual aggression as well as the proof that humans eat meat because it is "natural." "Sex" and "sport" have been used synonymously in Western literature. During winter break it seemed that I could not go a day without reading newspaper articles that conflated the two terms. While there is a real danger in equating "women" with "nature" and by extension as closer to nonhuman animals than "males," I want to suggest that perhaps the liberation of women is intimately connected to the liberation of another oppressed group: animals. And perhaps some forms of oppression the two groups share are not all that different.

### Meat is King

People with power in Western history have always consumed and controlled distribution of meat. In Medieval and Renaissance cultures the aristocracy of Europe consumed large courses of every kind of meat available while the laborer ate bread and vegetables. Dietary habits proclaim gender distinctions as well. A mythology permeates all classes that meat is a masculine food and meat eating a male activity. Men barbecue, men get steak dinners for Father's Day, men cut the turkey. Women, second-class citizens, are more likely to eat what we consider second-class foods: vegetables, fruits and grains.

Vegetables are "women's food," my grandfather teasingly reminds me on holidays. Since Western women have been made subsidiary in a male-dominated, meat-eating Western context, so has "their" food. Just as we think a woman cannot make it on her own in a male world, so we think that vegetables cannot make a meal on their own. This is despite the fact that vegetables provide, on the average, more than twice the vitamins and minerals of meat.

When we do kill animals, we use tools of violence like knives to kill and consume them. It is important to relation this to meat and ask ourselves: who traditionally wields these implements of violence and power? Mom can't cut the meat, not just because meat is masculine and therefore the male has control over its distribution and consumption, but because the knife is the implement of power, and only the male has this power. The knife, a metaphor to any implement of male power, gives the patriarch power over animals, power over all the other members of the family, and power over anything that succumbs to the blade. The fact that the father cuts the meat or cooks hamburgers out on the grill has nothing to do with his concern to be helpful, but rather it is a



man's right to hold the knife, to cut the meat, to distribute the flesh. This is the sexual politics of meat. Meat represents both manhood and power over the female in our society.

### Meat is male

It has traditionally been thought/assumed that the working man needs meat for strength: that in eating the muscle of strong animals, males become strong. Visions of meat-eating football players, wrestlers, and boxers lumber through our minds. Though dieticians have proven (and vegetarians like Carl Lewis are proof that) the equation between meat and muscle is wrong, the myth remains: men are strong, men need to be strong, therefore men need meat.

The late Marty Feldman observed that the connection between meat and male-hood has to do with the function of the male within our society. Football players (and spectators) drink beer because it's a man's drink and eat steak because it's a man's meal. The emphasis is on 'man-sized portions' and 'hero' sandwiches. Hearty beef stews are named "Manhandlers." "Meat-and-potatoes" men are stereotypically strong and hearty, rough and ready, able-bodied males.

In a sense it is a bit ironic that I use the phrase "meat is male," because most animals and animal products labeled "consumable" are female. Western culture depends on female animals for "feminized protein" such as milk and eggs. The fact that the cow or chicken is slaughtered once she stops producing milk or eggs indicates that her value lies in her reproductive ability. Furthermore, industrialized meat-centered societies subsist by and large on the female flesh of cows and chickens rather than bulls and roosters. When we exploit the maternal abilities of these animals, what are the implications for women's rights? Can feminists who claim that women are oppressed consistently use and consume the female bodies of animals oppressed by the same means? One might ask how this gendered use of animals influences the notions of a "woman's place" in Western human cul-

ture.

The objection to killing animals is equated with sentimentality, childish emotions, or "Bambi-morality." This objection is seen as "womanish," or feminine. The modern philosopher Spinoza's oft-quoted opinion was that the objection to killing animals was "based upon an empty superstition and womanish tenderness, rather than upon sound reason." In a society that equates females with emotions and "irrational" behavior, it is no wonder that vegetarianism has been seen as a woman's project, as sentimentalist, and equated with women's status in patriarchal culture.

### Meat and Language

We live in a culture that has institutionalized the oppression of domesticated animals on at least two levels: in formal structures (such as slaughterhouses, meat markets, zoos, laboratories, and circuses), and in language. Language influences meat consumption by replacing references to living animals with the parts of the animals that are consumed and defining "meat" in exclusively positive terms. That we refer to eating "meat" rather than "animals" is one example of an "absent referent," or how language erases the thing it refers to.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines "meat" as "the essence or principle part of something." Thus we have the "meat of the matter," and a "meaty question." To "beef up" something is to somehow improve it. "Vegetable," on the other hand, represents less desirable characteristics: "suggesting or like a vegetable, as in passivity or dullness of existence, monotonous, inactive." Meat is "something one enjoys or excels in." Vegetables represent someone who does not enjoy anything: "a person who leads a monotonous, passive, or merely physical existence." To vegetate is to lead a passive existence, just as to be feminine is to be passive. The irony, of course, is that fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds are the only living food (i.e. the cells are still alive), while meat is a dead, fiberless, lethargy-producing "food." Nevertheless, once vegetables are viewed

**Can feminists  
who claim  
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means?**

World Wide Web



as "women's food," then by association they become viewed as feminine, passive. To rethink gender categories and limits of terms such as "masculine" and "feminine" is to rethink the categorizing and inherent hierarchy of meat and non-meat food.

### Objectification, Fragmentation, Consumption

Animal oppression through meat consumption is fundamentally related to women's oppression through our language. Men use language to equate women and parts of women's bodies with animals. Men derogatorily call women "chicks," "bunnies," "bitches," "squirrels," "pussycats," "cows," "nags," "foxes," "old bats," "biddies," and a woman's vagina "beaver." Why do these metaphors work? And how do they work to perpetuate the oppression of both women and animals?

Both women and animals go through a process, metaphorically and literally, of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption which links butchering and sexual violence in our culture. Objectification permits an oppressor to view another being as an object or thing. The oppressor then violates this being by object-like treatment: e.g. rape or butchery.

Our patriarchal society fragmentizes women and animals through the same process. Men describe women through their breasts, legs, thighs, ass, and vagina, connecting them to the consumable body parts of a chicken, pig, or cow. This form of objectification denies women as whole, complex and living entities. They are



simply bits and pieces to be consumed: a piece of ass, women's breasts, and a pussy. Similarly, people do not recognize that the animal on their dinner plate was once a living creature; they see only a side of steak, chicken breasts, a liver and ribs. When a man says "nice rack," we must look to see if his reference is an animal's body part or a woman's. In Tom Petty's video, "Don't Come 'Round Here No More," the male Mad Hatter cuts up Alice as if she were a birthday cake (white on the outside, red on the inside) and consumes her with the other males in the group while she screams in pain. The controversial cover of a *Hustler Magazine* two decades ago showed a woman going into a meat grinder and coming out as ground beef. In countless movies, from "Brother Moon, Sister Sky" to "Footloose," women are referred to as "dessert," consumable and deliciously sweet. Women's flesh becomes food, nourishing the patriarchal order of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption of both women and animals.

### Meat and Radical Feminism

Animals become absent referents in at least three ways. Animals are literally absent from meat eating because they are dead. Another absent referent is definitional—when we eat animals we change the way we talk about them. We refer to baby cows as veal, steers as roast beef, steak, and hamburgers, pigs as pork, bacon, and sausage, chickens as breasts and legs. The third way in which animals become absent referents is metaphorical. The fate of animals becomes a metaphor for describing people's experiences: "I feel like a piece of meat." Animals become absent referents because their fate is a metaphor for someone else's experience. The meaning of the treatment of animals is undercut and absorbed into a human-centered hierarchy of meaning.

Cultural images of butchering and sexual violence are so connected that animals act as absent referents even in radical feminist discourse. In this sense, radical feminist theory participates in the same set of representational structures it seeks to expose. Radical feminists appropriate the experience of animals to interpret their own violation. They have claimed that that pornography depicts woman as a "female piece of meat," that "women in

brothels can be used like animals in cages." Linda Lovelace claims that when presented to Xaviera Hollander for inspection, "Xaviera looked me over like a butcher inspecting a side of beef." In each of these examples, feminists have used violence against animals as metaphor, literalizing and feminizing the metaphor, occluding the fate of the animal.

In constructing stories about violence against women, feminists have drawn on the same set of cultural images as their oppressors. According to Carol Adams, feminist critics collapse sexuality and consumption and have titled this nexus "carnivorous arrogance" (Simon de Beauvoir), "gynocidal gluttony" (Mary Daly), "sexual cannibalism" (Kate Millet), "psychic cannibalism" (Andrea Dworkin), "metaphysical cannibalism" (Ti-Grace Atkinson). These feminist theorists take us to the



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intersection of the oppression of women and the oppression of animals and then do an about-face, seizing the function of the absent referent to forward women's issues and so imitating and complementing a patriarchal structure. These women co-opt what is actually done to animals.

I suggest that these feminists should theorize in ways that show an understanding of why their metaphors work. If women are going to claim that they have

the experience of being oppressed in bodily ways, through sexual violence realized in objectification, fragmentation, and consumption, then why don't they use meat metaphors to liberate both their situation and the plight of other oppressed sentient beings?

### Conclusion

June Brindel in Carol Adams's *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, writes: "The plant world, in contrast to the animal world, supplies the food, clothing and shelter of people since time out of mind, as well as our model of the wonder of life—in its cycle of growth and decay, blossom and seed, wherein death and life appear as transformations of a single, superordinated, indestructible force." The plant world yields imagery of tending, nurturing, slow evolutionary change, and harmony with the seasons. However, the institutionalized violence of meat consumption needs to be understood in the context of vegetarian alternatives without romanticizing women as more "natural." The political implications of vegetarian feminist activism are derived from a sense of organic unity rather than disjunction; harvest rather than violence; living in harmony rather than having dominion over others. We should not be afraid of wanting a more peaceful, organic, less violent society to live in. We should, however, be afraid of objectification of women as somehow like animals, which allows the suppression of women in a patriarchal society. Nevertheless, animals are exploited in similar ways to women because both are objectified, fragmentized, and consumed by a patriarchal culture. To conclude, the affirming goal of uniting feminist and vegetarian insights is this: to create a political symbolism based on an affirmation of a diet drawn from the plant world.

\* This essay was largely inspired by and has benefited immeasurably from the theorizing of Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan. See Carol Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat* and *Neither Man nor Beast*. For a copy of works cited, quote sources, and location of photographs used, please call Evan at x5023.



# GREENING GOD

## CHRISTIANS AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS FIND COMMON GROUND

By Kate Holbein

Backpacking in New Zealand last spring, I spent an afternoon talking to a self-identified Christian about nature and spirituality. During our conversation, I argued that humans are just one component of an interconnected ecological community and should not consider themselves the superior species. Although the man understood my point, he insisted that God gave the planet to humans so that humanity can achieve greatness. His comment has serious implications; what if Christianity also supports the belief that God sanctions anthropocentrism, unlimited human progress, and the exploitation of natural resources? Some have argued that Christianity contributed to the environmental crisis by introducing a human-centered world view that supports domination of nature. In Genesis, God commanded humans to "fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing."

However, Christians have recently sought to redefine our traditional understanding of humans' relationship to the environment. Christian theologians have developed an 'ecotheology,' primarily based on the belief that humans need to act as stewards of Creation. God wants humans to care for the earth and manage natural resources responsibly. Although this perspective is still problematic from an environmental standpoint because it implies that humans, as the superior species, should manipulate ecosystems that are otherwise self-sustaining, the stewardship model does offer a religious rationale for environmental protection.

Perhaps in response to this new ecotheology, Christians have become increasingly involved with environmental activism, especially those associated with liberal and evangelical denominations. In his book, *The Greening of Protestant Thought*, Robert Booth Fowler reports that since the first Earth Day, "increasing

numbers of Protestants—as individuals and as churches—have perceived the onset of an environmental crisis and the importance of attending to it." For example, the 1987 study, "Toxic Waste and Race," published by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice played a significant role in the emergence of the environmental justice movement. Republican leaders, who rely on the political support of conservative Christians, have been startled by Christians' increasing involvement in environmentalism,



which suggests that some religious groups may have significant political clout with politicians on environmental issues. In 1996, evangelical Christians played a central role in successfully pressuring conservative legislators to vote against a bill that would have weakened the Endangered Species Act.

Lynn White, one of the first to criticize Christianity for supporting human domination over nature, argued that because "the roots of our troubles are so largely religious, the remedy must also be essentially religious, whether we call it that or not." While Christians have begun to recognize that we may need a religious solution to the environmental crisis, lead-

ers within the environmental movement have made the mistake of focusing on creating structural change through political reform, while ignoring the need for a major overhaul of our fundamental value system, culture, and lifestyle choices. Radical environmentalists who criticize the mainstream movement call for a new philosophical, spiritual and ethical understanding of humans' relationship to the natural world. Yet this type of fundamental change seems unrealistic to many. How can social reformers in the United States hope to transform Americans' attitudes and beliefs? Environmentalists must begin by strengthening the relationship between the environmental movement and religion.

Leaders within the movement have just begun to appreciate that religious groups represent a powerful constituency waiting to be mobilized around environmental issues. William Meadows, the president of the Wilderness Society, recently acknowledged that the environmental movement must no longer be a secular movement, but must be "based on ethical values and beliefs." Carl Pope, the Executive Director of the Sierra Club, made a recent statement admitting that "the environmental movement for the past quarter of a century has made no more profound error than to misunderstand the mission of religion and the churches in preserving the Creation." Pope acknowledged that environmental leaders have made the mistake of focusing less on the public's attitudes than on influencing public policy.

Environmentalists must realize that merely enacting environmental legislation or reforming the political system will not be effective unless we rework our understanding of humans' relationship to the environment. Environmentalists and religious leaders have the opportunity to help transform individuals' attitudes, so that lasting, meaningful change on a structural level can be achieved. ☐



# D.A.R.E. SUCKS

## AMERICA SWALLOWS A BOGUS PROGRAM

By Adam Hurter

If you remember sniffing marijuana out of a black, ominous-looking jar when you were about eleven years old, you probably participated in Drug Abuse Resistance Education, commonly known as DARE.

DARE, which sends police officers into elementary and middle school classrooms to "teach" students about the dangers of drug abuse, is the nation's leading drug education program. About 700 million dollars of taxpayers' money pours into DARE annually. But DARE doesn't work.

DARE was founded in 1983 by an ex-cop in Los Angeles named Glenn Levant. About 26 million American fifth and sixth graders have "graduated" since DARE's inception. DARE takes up seventeen hours of school time, in one-hour intervals.

Levant says that DARE's sole purpose is to reduce the "drug problem" in this country. He says that DARE works. The research, though, has consistently and overwhelmingly proved otherwise.

About a dozen independent studies over the past decade have proven DARE to be completely ineffective. Various Justice Departments funded many of these studies, including one a few years ago by the Research Triangle Institute (RTI), a nationally prestigious institute which had never had a study go unpublished.

Before completing its study, RTI released the results of its preliminary findings at a national conference.

"We started finding that DARE simply didn't work," one RTI researcher told *Rolling Stone* magazine.

The national DARE organization kicked into high gear: such information could never been seen by the public. The group made threatening phone calls and violent threats to researchers, determined to hide the information. RTI's study was never published.

That incident, though, did not end studies on DARE. Another major study was already underway. The study, released April 6, 1998, tracked the long-term effectiveness of DARE. It was funded by the Illinois Justice Department and headed by University of Illinois Professor Dennis Rosenbaum. The study tracked 1,798 rural, suburban, and urban DARE students for six years.

According to the abstract of the completed study, "The results indicate that DARE has no long-term effects on a wide range of drug use measures." Rosenbaum's results showed that "suburban areas experienced small adverse effects from participation" in DARE.

So why doesn't DARE succeed in lowering drug use? Well, the way that the program is set up, DARE really doesn't stand much of a chance of working.

The DARE curriculum is nationally-set (though the organization refuses to release that curriculum to researchers or the press); it does not deviate from place to place. This itself is a downfall; it ignores the fact that students in different areas need to be taught

in different ways,

The entire premise of DARE is highly questionable. Teaching is not the job of police officers, and most of them are rather bad at it. After all, an elementary school teacher would certainly not be suited to chase criminals.

Another key element in DARE's lack of success is its failure to separate use from abuse. The DARE program teaches that all use is abuse with regards to all substances, including alcohol. This type of methodology is destined to failure.

Regardless of DARE, most teenagers are going to experiment with some sort of mind-altering substance, whether it be alcohol, marijuana, or tobacco. When teens try these "drugs," they realize that they are not as dangerous as they had been told they were. As they continue to realize that DARE's exaggerations of the dangers of, in particular, pot and alcohol, are just that, wild exaggerations, the program and the adults with which it is associated loses all of its credibility entirely.

Figuring that DARE must have lied about everything, people are more likely to try harder drugs. Ironically, DARE thus fails completely. This pattern, which creates a vast gap between the young and the supposedly more responsible adults, has been repeated time and again.

So, what is DARE? DARE is another lame tool in the United States' War on Drugs. Everyone knows that DARE doesn't work, yet somehow the program continues. In fact, in New York City, which was actually late to add DARE to its schools, Mayor Giuliani just hired hundreds of extra cops dedicated to just DARE.

The fact that DARE doesn't work is irrelevant. The entire Drug War hasn't worked; that is, it hasn't lowered drug use in the country despite billions of dollars of support money. DARE appears to be a good program. Support of DARE allows the average person to feel like he/she is doing his/her part in the War on Drugs, which the government has convinced most people is necessary.

Meanwhile, the government uses DARE as yet another way to watch-dog the public: through its children. The "DARE box" in every DARE classroom allows students to rat out anyone whom they suspect to be a "drug user," including family members. Many innocent kids are so intimidated that they tell on their parents or siblings, convinced that they have to. Many families have been broken up by this means.

Unfortunately, no one seems to care, because DARE has a powerful fan base, politicians who are very willing to take money away from humanitarian needs and funnel more and more into the Drug War.

In the forefront of that Drug War is DARE, a bullshit political feel-good program that doesn't work and never has. Couldn't we use 700 million dollars a year for something better?



# Why Travel?

Grossing close to \$4 trillion dollars a year, tourism is arguably the world's largest industry, vying with oil for top status. The World Bank, the IMF, and international resort developers market tourism to developing nations as a smokeless industry to fuel economic growth, but progressive voices have been quick to point out the impact of tourism—delicate ecosystems wrecked by golf-courses, resorts, and heavy human activity, archaeological sites sinking under the weight of the crowds they draw, locals pressured (or forced) to abandon subsistence lifestyles for low-paying service jobs, local cultures and lifestyles commodified by international capitalism. Some, noting the gap between the amount of money tourists spend in developing countries and the amount that actually stays there (the rest "leaks out" as profits for multinational hotel chains and the like), call tourism a new form of colonialism in which the West mines developing countries for their colorful cultures and pristine landscapes.

The Tourist is object of scorn around the world. You know him—he's the one in the Hawaiian shirt coldly snapping a photograph of a beggar in India, the one who breaks off a piece of the Great Pyramid to bring home with him, the one who thinks locals are stupid because they can't speak English and complains about the food wherever he goes. Yet somehow over 600 million people this year will shell out the money for an international holiday and elect themselves to that very status.

There's something that pushes us to travel: call it marketing, call it Travel Myth, but every tourist leaves home in

quest of something, whether it's surf and sun or stimulating cross-cultural encounters with the Other. And most of us find some grounds on which to set our quest apart from all others—some way to avoid, in our minds, the status of Tourist. The fact is that tourism is a social activity: conditions of economic inequality and cultural myths of paradise, self-discovery, and the authentic mass-produce both tourists and destinations. What it amounts to is that every "traveller" is a tourist in self-denial, someone who thinks he can pass through an area with no impact. And every traveller bemoans the effects of tourism on the places they travel through.

We at *Hermes* count ourselves among the general tourist population—we came back from winter break and semesters abroad brimming with travel stories and, to some degree, reservations. The question for us is not what the impact of tourism is; rather, we're trying to find out why we travel—what are we looking for, and where do we find it? In this section, Brian finds self-loathing in Mexico, Tyler explores the myth of the great american road trip, Danielle travels through Cameroon comparing her experience with the journals of a missionary who visited the same places a hundred years ago, and Andrea goes to Burma on a quest of enlightenment. Ultimately, we found that travel can have positive effects on the traveller; the key is to balance that against the impact of tourism on the land and people and find a model that can humanize the tourist without exploiting the tourist.

BRIAN EDWARDS-TIEKERT



# ISLA HOLBOX

## TOURIST CULTURE, TRAVEL MYTH, AND LOATHING IN PARADISE

**By Brian Edwards-Tiekert**

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, according to Douglas Adams, devotes precious little space to Earth. Located in 'the unfashionable end of the western spiral arm of a small galaxy,' it merits (in the expanded edition) a two word entry: "Mostly Harmless." The point, presumably, is that tourist literature has an amazing capacity to reduce, compress, and ultimately offend its subject.

*Lonely Planet: Mexico* (a popular 'budget' guide for the 'independent' traveler) has a similarly concise description of Isla Holbox, a town where I spent some time over break. In the space of four lines, it informs the reader that Isla Holbox makes a pleasant 'break' from someplace like Cancun, but that the water is 'murkier' than on the Caribbean, and 'the modern amenities are in short supply.' It describes how to get there—you take buses to the 'unappealing' port town of Chiquila ('Chiquila is a hole of a town,' it proclaims, 'try not to get stuck there for the night') where a ferry may or may not be running to the island. Under the heading "Places to Stay" it lists only the *Hotel Paradiso* by the dock, though there are more (and cheaper) places to stay in town—presumably some intrepid travel writer made it to the island, scribbled down the name and number of the closest hotel, and then got back on the ferry before it left him stranded.

If he had taken the eight-minute walk through town, he might not have minded. The streets of Isla Holbox are paved with white sand, and traffic consists of three things: the intermittent whisper of bicycles, the passing whine of a moped, and the *Superior* beer truck that each morning lumbers from the ferry to the bar to the *cervezeria* and back again.

Two hundred meters from the dockmaster's office a thrumming diesel generator housed in a tractor trailer powers the entire town; it's the only noise you can hear for a block in either direction. Further in, the *Holboxiños* have built their homes and shops of cement, painted them blue or yellow, and roofed them with thatch or tin; some have ringed their roofs with makeshift gutters to collect rainwater in covered cisterns.

In the middle of town is a large *zócalo*. Children run down cement paths that have shed fist-sized slivers into the sand. Lovers hold hands in chairs joined at one arm for precisely that purpose. As the sun sets, boys and men chase up and down the basketball court while girls watch from across the street. It is mostly women in the church behind them; they shuffle in and out beneath a crooked concrete cross held standing by a piece of string. In a town where the fishermen bring back red snapper, shark and lobster every afternoon, the only popular restaurant is the second-floor pizzeria overlooking the square.

Past the *zócalo* it is only two more blocks to the beach at the end of town. The breakers still hold the shape of concrete sacks stacked in columns at low tide; at night tiny fishing boats tug gently at anchors on the shore. Three miles to the left is a lagoon

where flamingos spend the night; the beach terminates in mangrove clusters four miles to the right. Once, a plane filled with cocaine crashed in the mangroves. Now eight soldiers with machine

guns patrol the beach all night long lest Colombian cartels use Holbox as a drop; every six weeks a new group replaces the old, lest the soldiers get friendly with the locals.

A hundred miles west of Cancun, the *Holboxiños* watch their soldiers, talk of mega-resorts consuming the Caribbean coast beach by beach, and marvel. The town doesn't have any singular attractions and it's not on the way to anywhere—the tourist maps are slow to include it. The island itself is on the border between the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, which places it just outside of the realm of coral sands and turquoise waters that give developers wet

dreams.

Holbox is beautiful in the way that many small towns are beautiful: carefree nine-year-olds bike though the streets at midnight and their parents don't worry. It is beautiful in the way of Mexico: they've seen their share of *gringos*, but they'll still invite you in for dinner. It is beautiful—with mangroves, sandbars, and flamingos—in the manner of most tropical islands; but it still isn't the right kind of beautiful to merit a page-long entry in the *Lonely Planet*. Thank God.

When I got there I figured I'd outwitted the travel guides and snuck into Paradise. It is the nature of travel guides that if you go someplace the guide devotes more than a column to, you're destined to see a hundred people with the same book. I'd seen Mexico's tragic monuments to tourism: Cancun's coastline of casinos and hotels, Chichen Itza's Disneyland of concessions and Mayan souvenir stores, the 'aquarium' in Playa Del Carmen where for \$200 you can swim with dolphins in a tank. And then there were tourism's casu-

**A hundred miles west of Cancun, the Holboxiños talk of mega-resorts consuming the Caribbean coast beach by beach, and marvel.**

**It was a vision of Tourism hovering hungrily on the edge of Eden, and I resolved not to be part of the Fall.**



alties—the dead reef off Cancun, stories of dolphins that killed themselves trying to escape capture, Mayan traditions made the stuff of T-shirts, tchotchkes, and wage labor. Here was a beach that hadn't been trampled, a culture that hadn't been yoked, a quaintness that hadn't been commodified.

Then I saw a large new hotel on the downtown beach ('large' meant ten rooms and three suites, but it was the biggest in town). Two miles out of town I found a small cabana resort that raked its beach and booked its rooms through travel agents and flew in guests from Cancun and even had a *webpage* (though they had only two cabanas filled when I was there during peak season). Then someone told me foreigners owned nearly all the property that fronts on the island's crunchy beaches and slightly-less-than-perfect waters (*Lonely Planet* warns that there's actually *seaweed* in there), and though massive development seemed impossible on an island without paved roads or a fresh water source, I thought of the *Lonely Planet* entry and imagined these foreigners tapping their fingers in infernal board rooms, smiling malevolently, and biding their time.

It was a vision of Tourism hovering hungrily on the edge of Eden, and I resolved not to be part of the Fall. I would spend my money where the locals spent theirs, swear off English, shun other *gringos* at all costs, and silently resent those insensitive tourists who, with their Isla Holbox T-shirts, cappuccinos, and \$50-a-night suites, were already changing the island for the worse.

I rented a concrete room from a fishing family who kept a pig in the backyard, ordered my lunch at the pizzeria, and spoke nothing but Spanish for six hours straight. That was about how long my resolve lasted.

Most places I've traveled to I've noticed this trend: people, particularly 'independent' travelers, arrive with the best intentions of experiencing local culture and

then, after a day of struggling to communicate across social, cultural, and/or linguistic gaps, they gladly latch onto the first fellow-traveler they find, order a round of beer, and talk about home. In Third World countries, it helps that the overwhelming majority of international travelers are white—it's easy to pick the other foreigner out of a crowd of, say, five-foot-tall Maya, and odds are that even if he isn't from your hometown, he's still going to speak English.

Travelers and tourists form instant cliques that are the foundations of a tourist micro-culture in any well-traveled location. They speak the same language, talk about home, travel, and the tourists they've loathed, and build for themselves a cultural comfort zone in an alien land. Any town with a growing tourist industry sees its micro-culture grow accordingly, and the micro-culture can fuel the growth of tourism—when a place like Guatemala's Lagos de Atitlan gets a reputation as a traveler's hangout, it draws still more travelers. Presumably, the micro-culture expands without limit until, driven in no small part by the wallets

of its constituents, it eclipses local culture and becomes the *dominant* culture. The most extreme example is Cancun: twenty years ago it was a sleepy village with a more than marketable reef; now, with a population of 300,000, it's called an "American City in Mexico." All the signs are in English, all prices in dollars, and the locals struggle to learn English so they can work more lucrative positions in the service industry. And so tourism takes on the mantle of colonialism for the 21st century.

No matter how independent an 'independent' traveller, s/he paves the road for further tourism—his or her very presence is a comfort to other Westerners, and another tally mark in the minds of locals gauging the market for a new T-shirt shop. The notion of the traveler as an 'individual' itself is a myth—both

traveler and tourist are socially-produced identities built on the wealth gap between tourist and local and driven by corporate travel culture's myths of paradise, adventure, and the quest for the 'authentic.' The conditions that produce one traveler and one destination can hardly help but produce more travelers headed to the same place—this to the endless frustration of travelers who've been sold on the notion of exploring the exotic, touching the untouched, and discovering things for the first time.

In the end most travelers have an innate loathing for the tourists that spoil their vacation spots and have to find some way to separate themselves from late capitalism's cultural refuse. Everyone's got a favorite straw-man tourist. For some it's 'Eurotrash.' For some it's dirty hippies. Some target the camera-clicking Japanese. Some point at *gringos*. Some still hate the stereotypical Hawaiian-shirt-and-clip-on-sunglasses sightseer. To be honest, when I worked in a restaurant in Woodstock, my pet peeve was Israelis—another waiter had coined a name for visitors from New Jersey: 'Urban White Trash.'

In the pizzeria, I sat down with a school-teacher from North Carolina, an anthropologist from Germany, and a mural-painter from London. We ordered a round of beers and talked about home and then one of them asked me if I'd like

**Most travellers have an innate loathing for the tourists that spoil their vacation spots, and they have to find some way to set themselves apart from all the rest.**

Photo by James Bond



Tourists and Dead Wildlife in Isla Holbox



to join them on a boat trip the next morning and I said yes.

A small man with a small boat took us to an island bird sanctuary slightly larger than the Campus Center courtyard. There was another boat anchored there full of Mexicans who sat where they were and looked at us as we walked ashore. Our guide didn't say much except 'walk around,' so walk around we did. Cameras appeared. Birds of every description blanketed the trees and there wasn't much in the way of paths so we just bumbled around beaches until someone figured out that if you got your camera up and walk into a bush, you get a great shot of the pelicans spreading their wings and taking off. Our guide didn't say anything. I figured an island so remote must not have enough visitors to worry about impact.

Then I rounded a small tree in quest of my own photos and came face to face with a monster. He was huge: six-and-a-half feet and at least twice my weight—there were two Germans and a Mexican with him and they *all* fit in his shadow; his Whalers T-shirt hung out over a pastel blue bathing suit; he had a camera the size of my head in one hand, two telephoto lenses hanging from his neck, and he was using a fishing rod with a noose tied to the end to try and catch an iguana that

bolted when I appeared.

"YOU SCARED MY IGUANA." He had hearing aids in both ears. "SOMEONE TIE ANOTHER NOOSE." He told me he was from Queens, that he'd

been to this island fourteen times, then he hooked a bigger iguana which slipped the knot and ran off with the noose around its neck. Then he spotted a boa, demanded his snake hook from the German girl, and I left.

The Mexicans were still watching us from their boat. I put a hand on one of the beams of a small wooden tower in the bushes—you could get some great photos from

on top, but there didn't seem to be a ladder. The Monster's guide was there, and I asked him if I could climb it. He said yes.

I was ten feet up a pole, about to swing onto the platform when something as big as I was took off from the roof.

"THAT'S AN OSPREY. THAT'S MY FAVORITE BIRD IN THE WORLD."

My guide was with the Monster. He told me, very passively, that I wasn't supposed to go up there. I got down, I apologized, and he shrugged. I told him I didn't know. He didn't say anything. And then we left.

That night I found out nobody was even supposed to walk on that island—our guide had lost his boating permit for two weeks, but it had still been worth it for the \$40 we paid him. Part of me had known that you're not supposed to go bush-whacking through nesting grounds, and part of me knew the tower had no ladder for a reason—I realized that the line between me and the Monster was thinner than I'd ever care to admit.

Let me elaborate: a friend once vented his frustration to me about a particularly popular line of environmental logic that he called "Save the

Humans"—i.e. fix the ozone because we'll get skin cancer, save the rain forest because we need the oxygen, save this species or that one to maintain biodiversity; in the end it all comes down to self-interest. Radical environmentalism, he contended, held all things natural to be valuable in and of themselves, whether they benefit us, ignore us, or eat us.

I realized that Tourism creates an even more twisted logic of conservation: "Save it for Me." The tourist develops a profound admiration for the sights s/he sees, but it is coupled with the desire to consume them. You appreciate the pyramids, the rainforest, the reefs and waterfalls, count yourself an enemy of anything that would pollute or destroy them, and you do it for one simple reason: you want them to be around so you can enjoy them. It's an outrage that anyone would log the Amazon *before you get to see it*. You get angry at other tourists because they're the reason you have to wait in line, because they get in your pictures, because they encroach upon your experience, because you know that the sheer volume is sinking the pyramids and killing the reef; but what you don't recognize is that you more or less all want the same thing. I'm sure the Monster from Queens was all for keeping the sanctuary protected—it'd leave him more boas to hunt and iguanas to noose.

Some part of me knew all along that I wasn't supposed to be on that island, but I wasn't about to ask questions. I was going to climb a tower so that I could get a better photograph than anyone else and enjoy what was rightfully mine. So he wanted to catch a lizard. I wanted to climb a tower. We both rationalized something we knew was wrong. It wouldn't be a problem if there weren't so many other people ruining things that we had the right to ruin for ourselves.

In the end, you see a little bit of yourself in the ugliest of ugly tourists. Some part of me wanted to catch a boa too, just to see what it felt like, to have it too myself, to get a good close-up. What it all comes down to is this: if you care about people and places, then travel—particularly sight-seeing—will always be a process of self-loathing.

**Everyone's got a favorite straw-man tourist. For some it's 'Eurotrash', for others 'gringos,' then there's 'dirty hippies' and the camera-clicking Japanese.**

**In the end, you see a little bit of yourself in the ugliest of ugly tourists.**



Photo: James Bond

After unsuccessfully trying to noose an iguana, the Monster trapped a boa for a photo op.



# FEAR AND LOATHING IN GRAND JUNCTION

B Y T Y L E R C A B O T

*We were somewhere around Barstow on the edge of the desert when the drugs began to take hold. I remember saying something like "I feel a bit lightheaded; maybe you should drive...."*

*"Man, this is the way to travel," said my attorney. He leaned over to turn the volume up on the radio, humming along with the rhythm section and kind of moaning the words: "One toke over the line, Sweet Jesus...One toke over the line..."*

—Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*

I was on the Great American Road Trip with my father and shockingly the only parts of Thompson's scenario too far-fetched to be possible were the drugs. Then again, we had pretzels, licorice, doughnuts and caffeine—anything was possible.

We had set off from San Diego three days earlier on a mission: make it to Middletown with a night to spare before move-in day. Mom cooked an early breakfast and sent us on our way. Three thousand four hundred miles to go—it was bonding time.

I still remember my father calling me at school, and propositioning me in the tone of a frosh asking a girl on a first date. Perhaps, just maybe, if I had some interest, I would think about driving with him cross-country. "Just an idea though, no pressure; only if you want to," he added, wondering how I would react. Would I be busy that week washing my hair, vacationing in Europe, or could he pick me up at seven-thirty?

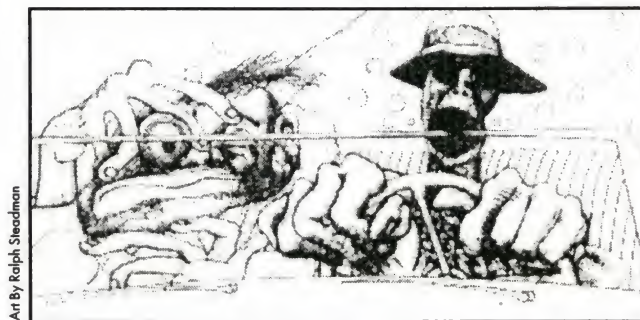
I was shocked. As any son knows, the thought of spending a week alone with one's father is startling to say the least. Visions of Chinese water torture may come to mind.

Then, I thought about it for a bit. Why not embark on the Great American Road Trip with my father? When would I have another opportunity like this? Screw fears of uncomfortable silence. I was going driving with my Dad and I was going to have a wonderful time. *Ahoy Pa, we shall hit the road like Kerouac. Don't wait up mom—Connecticut or bust!*

So here I was cruising through Grand Junction (it does exist, and actually is quite beautiful) on route eighty with my father at my side. We had begun in the deserts of the Southwest and made our

way up Utah and the Rockies. With each mile we grew more comfortable; awkwardness vanished.

Our days began to develop a sequence. We would rise early in the morning and eat breakfast on the road. A few gas stops later we would pick-up a quick lunch, then back on the highway again. We became journeymen, with no other responsibilities or commitments than driving and exploring. Days were long, averaging fourteen hours. Our mentalities transformed from those of tourists to



Art By Ralph Steadman

those of truck drivers, always on the move, with thousands of miles to cover.

Wake up in a new state, a new world every morning. Be a transient for a living, or at least for a week. Rise, drive, sleep. Rise, drive, sleep. Talk with the waitress at the local Perkins. Discuss the stock market with a gas station owner in rural Utah. Yet more, discuss these things with the man next to you, your father.

*We've got to make it to Cleveland tonight, just a few more hours. Arrive at the Holiday Inn in Toledo (screw it, we'll hit Cleveland tomorrow). A quick pizza, a run-in with one of my father's old high school friends. Stories which I wasn't supposed to hear, then off to bed.*

Motel after motel, cheap restaurant after cheap restaurant, conversation


began to flow; thoughts exchanged. In Iowa I learned the genealogy I never knew, or at least had never taken the time to fully understand and appreciate. In Nebraska we tackled our ideas regarding religion and faith. We were explorers driving through the valleys and plains of the vast expanse called America. We were explorers driving through the valleys and plains of our relationship.

I pushed and he prodded. The forum was open—anything flew. It was the attorney who married straight out of college and has been working hard since, opposite his idealist son, who cringes at the thought of fluorescent lights and swears against the prospect of wearing a tie to work. "No dad, I don't think I need to define how long I want to 'wander.' Why should I? Why limit myself?" Then it was his turn: "Isn't there any point

where you say to yourself, 'if I want to settle down, if I want to raise a family, I need to do it now?'" A discussion ensued as we shared our points of view.

Eventually, states and places were no longer names on a road atlas. Their titles had become irrelevant. Pennsylvania was no longer the "Keystone State," but the state where I related to my dad ideas about what I want to do, where we discussed our value systems. It became the "Value State." Utah became the "Cow State," after we dodged numerous heads of cattle that wandered freely on the state highway.

We arrived in Middletown on schedule, five days after we had set off from the Pacific Ocean.

I took the gamble; I jumped at an opportunity which as I grow older and more independent becomes less likely to occur. Our drive across the country to Wesleyan was merely a cheap excuse for my father and I to spend time together, less as Father and son, and much more as two friends hitting the road. 



# PAVING PARADISE

CAMEROON 100 YEARS AGO AND NOW

By Daniele Anastasion

Marcel Proust has written that "the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes." What of the landscape that finds itself with new eyes? For centuries now, since the migration of the first white men into Africa, new eyes have looked upon its landscape and new eyes peer out of it. And still new eyes reflect upon it. One summer, I, like each generation of white men and women before me, ventured into Cameroon to secure her treasures and seek new landscapes. Curiosity found me in the small corner of a library reading the journals of Jean Kenyon Mackenzie, a woman who, nearly a century ago, ventured into the same territory as I had. A protestant missionary who lived in small bush villages for almost ten years dating from 1904 to 1913, Mackenzie's Cameroon was vastly different from the one that I experienced. The country and culture she described, once raw and new to the Western world, now comes fully equipped with a Hilton for the modern day tourist.

In a land that has been married to the Western world for nearly a century, Mackenzie's journals prove doubly fascinating: not only do they present a picture of the lost virgin bride—Africa as the modern tourist romanticizes her—but they also record the changes as they occurred, the wave at its crest rolling towards the present. Well aware of the perils of the clash of systems, Mackenzie sensed the magnitude of the major shifts taking place and so felt compelled to record them.

In the same way that the archaeologist desires to preserve what has remained, so I set out to record the gaping contrasts

between Mackenzie's Cameroon and my own. I kept a list of each town and village mentioned by Mackenzie in her travels, intending to cross-reference these with those that I had visited. Unfortunately, most of these names are not to be found on modern maps of Cameroon—the towns and villages mentioned had either been swallowed by expanding cities and highways or wiped out in UPC uprisings against the government in the early sixties. Thus a continual string of places described by Mackenzie becomes a search for one lost city after another.

I encountered another obstacle in the fact that Mackenzie never penetrated past the dense forest region, limiting her knowledge of Cameroon to the coastal areas. In comparing my observations of towns and villages to hers, I would have to eliminate entire regions of the North that I'd visited. This presented a problem in that a large majority of the images I recalled had spanned the entire country all the way to dusty Lake Chad. It then occurred to me how very remarkable it was that I had been able to access the parts of Cameroon that I did.

Mackenzie had a tough time as it was, beating through the bush paths along the coast. For her to have reached the desert scrub with which I became so casually familiar would have been a triumph. And so this obstacle for Mackenzie and me, travel, became the very means by which I would convey the most important change that has occurred between her time and mine.

And now, we finally come to the amusing difference between Mackenzie's entrance into the country and mine. We begin with our beloved missionary, who upon reaching the coast, endures a six day

journey through Cameroon's equatorial forest to her post at Lolodorf. On July 31, 1904, Mackenzie writes, "Here the ship lies about three miles off the coast, and we had to go ashore in a surf-boat...You get into the boat any way you can...There were five rowers on a side, and they were, it seems, very skillful in their management of the boat. But this was lost on me...I thought we would end up in the sea...when the next wave carried us ashore again, natives ran into the surf to her prow and held her against the return, while others picked agitated missionaries of the sides." After being carried through the surf, Mackenzie recounts her group's preparations as they waited at Batanga, the receiving-port for the mission, for the fifty "carriers" who would lead their crew on a four nights' journey into the interior. Walking twenty miles each day, at the beginning of the rainy season, she and her hammock carrier struggled up hills only to slide back down into pools of mud. Apparently, Mackenzie's introduction to the country required of her what the modern day adventurer, who, in search of physical hardship and endurance, dares to find.

Yet, her entrance, depending on the interpreter, can be seen as either more or less graceful than mine. Although she writes of "the miserable 4:30 A.M. sensation", Mackenzie romantically recounts the splendor and beauty of that virgin equatorial forest. I, myself, compare the beauty of which she writes to my own first glimpse of the African rainforest. Our lovely AirFrance flight gliding through the sky did provide a modern perspective unknown to Mackenzie—that of the aerial view. However, one is allotted a window only so big in that tiny pressurized cabin, a window that doesn't allow escape from blinking lights and nasal landing warnings. And, of course, instead of the fifty scantily clad carriers to greet you in the forest, the Douala airport provides the modern day tourist with fifty suitors, each

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one targeting the first-timer for some easy money. While I lost out on the mosquitoes and sweat of Mackenzie's four day trek, she had to forfeit frequent flier points and the usual document hassles of Douala's airport.

If the journey is the destination, as is popularly said, means of travel dramatically altered our destinations in terms of both the travel experience itself and the areas we were able to access. Douala airport to nearby Buea took only an hour or so by bush taxi. In Mackenzie's day, it would have meant another four day trek through bush trails. In 1904, your way in the forest is measured by the rivers that are to be crossed as opposed to the speedometer. Mackenzie and her crew walked from village to village with lanterns and torches or, in some cases, were forced to take canoes along the rivers through heat, mud, mosquitos, and mangrove trees.

Of course, I, in my small yellow bush taxi (Peugeot 504) pass over the convenient bridges and roads now running adjacent to the rivers, listening to barges sound their smoggy horns. I imagine Mackenzie's ghost canoe gliding quietly in and out of the huge freighters that clog up the riverways, waving my hand in one-woman memoriam. The rising industrial smoke echoes of a distant time when there were small fires to be found all along the bush path. Mackenzie had written of the continuous activity of hundreds of carriers along the bush trails hired by the government and traders: "The forest is not lonely. There is a continual line of carriers coming from the east with ivory and rubber. I feel a breath of fresh air from the interior pass with them; you know, the feeling one has about a ship from foreign lands....and everywhere by the road, in the open spaces before the houses, at the foot of the great cottonwood trees, the little fires built by the carriers—little fires showing violet lights and crimson, and pallid blue—hundreds of little jewel fires, and about them the ground black with sleeping men. So the carriers sleep; they cast aside their burdens and their loin-cloth, 'and so good-night!'"

The next morning, their loin-cloths

missing, the carriers woke up as truck drivers, cargo loaders, flight attendants, and train conductors. I passed them in Limbe, Bamenda, Yaounde, and Garoua, some filled with travellers, some with workers, and others with oil from Chad. For every fifty or so carriers, it can be estimated, I saw one bush taxi in Buea, a town relatively close to the area inhabited by Mackenzie. At a single point in time, one of three hundred taxis in Buea will hold up to five passengers, each unknown to the next, each sharing the same destination (be the journey the destination).

The nature of modern day travel has both literally and figuratively altered the face of Cameroon. Rusty, broken down cars rest like shrines on the sides of roads



(there exists no such thing as a junkyard in Cameroon), having become as much a part of the landscape as the dense tropical plants. The aerial view would reveal winding and ambitious roads, hundreds like arteries and veins, connecting the vital organs of the country. The unmaintained paved roads boast potholes so large that they comprise more of the road than does the solid black tar. They are, nevertheless, made to accommodate the bush taxis, motorcycles, and trucks found all across the country speeding to the next shell station. The trading post

found adjacent to the canoe drop in Mackenzie's day has, of course, been replaced by the shanty alongside the road selling Fantas, toilet paper, and petrol in small glass jars. One wonders, though, when exactly the canoe drop turned into the roadside shanty, the paddle replace by the pedal. Slowly and then...suddenly?

During her last years in Cameroon, Mackenzie returned to several of the villages in which she had first begun her work. In the ten years in which she inhabited Africa, so much change had occurred due to the building of roads, that even she mourned the loss of the old ways. "All the sweet intimacy of the forest has gone with the trail, and out of the terrific tumult of the building of the road runs this immaculate highway quiet in the sun. When I think of the uproar of the days and the outraged earth and the great cries of the falling trees and the enforced efforts of the forest tribes amongst the debris, I feel some lack of zest in the journey on the complacent highway. Yet it is a wonderful road and most creditable to those white men who camped along it. I suppose that they are well out of this by now, travelling in other forests, and glad not to have to live 'on top of the paths' they have completed."

The white man gone, his connection to the road brief and fleeting, the Cameroonian is now forced to live "on top of the paths." Here we must look at the

aspect of travel not from Mackenzie's perspective or mine, but from that of the Cameroonian. When I think of all the roads on which I travelled in Cameroon, I can't help but wonder how many villages were pushed aside for them, or how many men left their homes in order to build them. Roads were not simply built from one village to the next, but through and over one village and the next. As Mackenzie so poignantly states, "There is not a wheel that turns in the forest but an African custom is broken on it."

The building of the roads, though, was only a precursor to the cavalcade of



change that would invade Cameroon. Mackenzie writes, "You must be prepared, if you open the window of your mind toward Africa, to have an airplane fly in. You must be prepared for the sound of passing trains, for the rattle of machinery, for the rustle of corn, for the odor of tobacco, for the great fields of cotton, for rubber in huge quantities, for the sparkle of diamonds, for the flow from Africa's golden fountains of the gift of palm oil...No more Dark Continent—cities now, and electric light plants, mines, labor and labor problems." Mackenzie's speculation has proven strikingly accurate. The plane has long since flown into Africa, Cameroon Airlines offering six flights daily from Douala to Yaounde.

New modes of transportation, like any revolution, were accompanied by radically altered belief systems in Cameroon. Imagine going about your business in the forest only to be disrupted by a metal bird rustling noisily across the sky. At the beginning of the century, French and British planes would fly overhead and drop supplies to explorers in isolated parts of the inner continent. Entire "cargo cults" formed to explain these gift-bearing steel birds, then believed to be blessings from the gods.

With the coming of the white man, the African not only dealt with a change in his system of beliefs, but in the very essence of his existence—his concepts of space and time had been radically altered. Mackenzie writes, "The white man's need has been expressed throughout Africa by his mechanical devices—the devices by which he himself has been altered past belief in the last hundred years are set to modify the black man overnight...probably you must wonder sometimes, as I do often enough...as to the future of the African peoples. I don't know my dears. I have not an idea. They wonder themselves; they have misgivings that haunt and shake them. They beg me to explain their low estate on any other ground, if I can, than their intrinsic inferiority. They see as clearly as you do that the

normal man does not sleep away the thousand years, or all the ages."

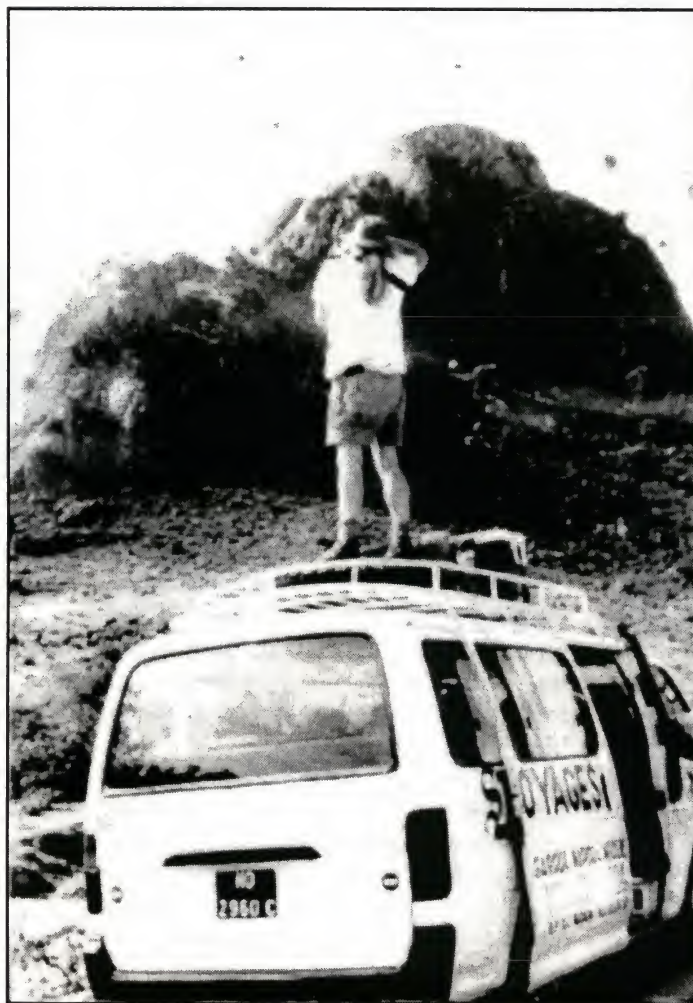
The bush paths, once quiet and contented, were suddenly deemed inadequate for the white man and his machines. The African, having "slept away the thousand years", wanting madly to prove his capability, races toward the finish line. He eagerly hops the trains appearing out of the mist from the West—no matter where they're headed, he knows from whence they came. The journey is the destination. The West has become his only salvation—schools, corporations, automobiles—and so he climbs its ladder blindfolded. Transportation, the means by which the Westerner first distinguished himself in the forest, has now become the symbolic key to the maze of modernity in Cameroon. Every Cameroonian remembers the first man in his village to possess a bike. Decades old photos reveal men posing proudly beside the family car, the sole purpose of the picture being the documentation of that holy shrine. Modes of transportation delegate

self-worth, the Cameroonian now able to repossess the road that once uprooted him.

We've paved paradise and put up a parking lot. Here, Proust's sentiments return to us with new meaning: in the attempt to acquire new eyes, we have essentially changed the landscape. For the traveller, the act of seeing necessitates that we change what we look upon. The facilitation of the traveller, by its very nature, eradicates what the next explorer will wish to see. It is this paradox that faces every modern traveller, this zero-sum game that only allows us to venture at the cost of determining the experience of those who will follow in our tracks.

Collectively, from one venturer to the next, we have found new eyes. Mackenzie writes, "and each generation of white men has had a new Africa—the gift in the main of enduring travellers, young, curious, who have gone out unarmed to secure her treasures, to know the sources of her rivers, the water sheds of the continent, and her material secrets. Many of

them are forgotten...with time, the fully conscious African will read [the biographies of missionaries], modern types of approbation will seal them, and their adventures will have a nostalgic fascination in a fully explored world. Already these hills are less strange and this forest—I know the secret of many paths and shall soon know all. A country and a circumstance are soon familiar; only people are perpetually mysterious." In the short run, the country and circumstance may, in fact, be familiar. But as we have seen from Mackenzie's day to our own, change becomes the only constant, the country, the circumstance, and the people inseparable. In fact, the more comfortable and familiar Cameroon seems—roads, hotels, and air-conditioning—the more complex and uncertain the circumstance has truly become for both Cameroonian and traveller alike. ●





# BURMA NIRVANA

WHEN I WAS ON THE PATH TO FREEDOM

**By Andrea Kyan**

This past December I tried mindfulness meditation for the first time. I knew I would experience temporary pain and frustration, but I never imagined how much I would learn to enjoy and appreciate *Vipassana* (moment to moment mindfulness) meditation afterwards.

Since I had extra time after my semester in China, I thought this would be the perfect opportunity for me to go to Myanmar and study under their most esteemed monk, Venerable Sayadaw U Pandita. He is the abbot of Yangon's two internationally known meditation centers. I chose to study under a Burmese monk instead of one in India or Nepal because Sayadaw (Burmese for teacher) U Pandita was my father's meditation teacher when he was in his early twenties and the Sayadaw has become a family friend over the years. More importantly though, he is recognized as one of the most experienced and reputable meditation teachers in the world. (Plus, I hate to admit this but in Myanmar the newly built Forest Meditation Center is specifically designed to suit the needs and comforts of foreign yogis such as myself.)

At the retreat we were required to meditate a staggering fourteen hours per day. In addition, we all pledged ourselves to "Noble Silence" and spoke to no one other than our meditation teachers. The Junior Sayadaw would wake us with the pleasant echoes of his gong at 3AM every morning. Our day started with a one hour walking meditation followed by a one hour sitting meditation. We had meals at 5:30 and 10:30 in the morning, a daily interview with our teacher, and a daily one-hour Dhamma (Dharma) talk and

"juice time" at 5:00 in the evenings.

My first day was pure agony. I could not sit still for 15 minutes let alone a full hour, my back was killing me and every time I tried to meditate I fell asleep. My mind was constantly distracted by visions of my favorite restaurants back home, my mom's cooking, fresh baked bread, Oreos with milk, and the like. When my body was uncomfortable, all I could think of was having one of those famous Thai massages as soon as I reached Thailand. However, I had only thirty days in Myanmar and I knew I could not leave the same as I had arrived. So, day by day I fought on and my concentration grew and the 10 minutes became an hour and those visions of food no longer cluttered my mind.

It took me two weeks until I finally began to meditate properly, but those two weeks never seemed long nor did I ever dread the next day. Soon enough I was able to control my mind into a state of cool calmness and serene bliss. I became

very infatuated with these feelings I never felt before. My mind was in a state where I was neither happy nor sad. Even more intriguingly my mind was clear of all thoughts. One moment free of thoughts is one moment free of stress, one moment free of anger, one moment free of greed, and one moment free of suffering. Every moment of

mindfulness allows us to take one more step on the path to freedom towards Nirvana: the obtainment which ceases karmic effects, terminates continuous life cycles and frees one from all suffering.

I had never imagined that when my

time at the center came to an end I would be reluctant to leave. I wished for more time to see how much more I could realize. When I first arrived, I could not wait to visit my relatives in Mandalay and in Thailand, but my feelings had completely changed by the end of the month. Instead, I began to realize that the time to

be spent at those places was simply a waste. I quickly lost an incredible amount of my greed for material pleasures (nice cars, expensive clothes, exotic vacations, etc.). The fourteen-hour days no longer seemed staggeringly long, and despite not being able to socialize or speak to the other yogis, I

never once felt lonely. Furthermore, I no longer looked forward to the meals since my appetite for food completely disappeared. Unexpectedly, my body never became tired and my mind never fell restless. I felt rejuvenated and my mind was very alert, clean, clear and in control. I believed once I returned back into normal settings nothing could ever cause me stress, and I had a sense that I could withstand any kind of hardship or struggle.

During my fourth week at the *Hse Mon Gon* Forest Meditation Center I finally began to understand the essence of insight meditation and Buddha's teachings. It was not about the ability to experience the bliss and peace of meditation, but more so that these moments free of wandering thoughts enables us to gain wisdom. Simply realizing the important things in life has made a huge impact on me; this is why it is labeled insight. It is knowledge I could only cultivate by myself through personal experience and it is knowledge that could not have been realized in any book or taught by any teacher. ☸

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# BOOK REVIEWS

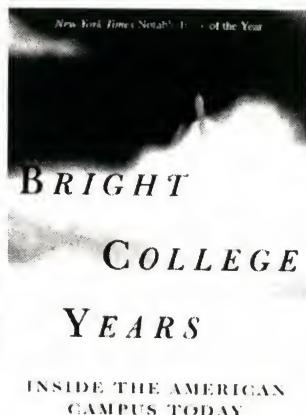
BY SARAH WILKES

Cast your mind back a few short years, and recall those most painful months when your whole being was consumed by the vile College Application Process. Maybe it was smooth sailing for a lot of you, but for me and many others now comfortably enrolled here, it was real bad. Like childbirth, though, the memory of the pain of college apps disappeared once it was over. That is, until I picked up a pair of books that came out about a year ago: Anne Matthews' *Bright College Years: Inside the American Campus Today*, and *Getting In*, a novel by James Finney Boylan

## Bright College Years

"On campus all trends recycle, its historians say. Contemporary students drink more like their grandparents than their parents. College life has always been violent; crisis is the university's natural state."

*Bright College Years* attempts to give a broad portrait of The American College/University Today, and I must say, it does a pretty good job. Matthews, alas, did not set her researcher's foot on Wesleyan's campus, so...so much for local interest. However, the range of schools she describes is impressive, starting with South Dakota's tiny Sinte Gleska

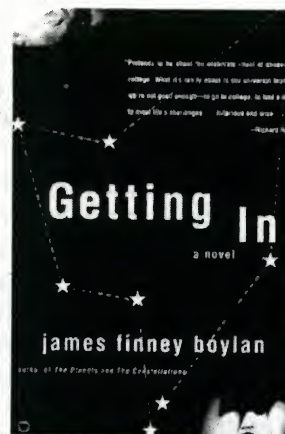


University (which serves the Lakota Indian community), and cruising past the usual suspects: U of Oregon in Eugene, Columbia, Trinity, UC Berkeley. It becomes clear that she could've picked ten or so college names out of a hat, arranged them in any order, and the portrait would look more or less the same, and, frighteningly, a lot more like Wesleyan than I expected. In her "Fall Break" chapter, Matthews describes a reassuringly familiar scene: "As the airport vans pull away from campus on Thursday afternoon, many of the first-years are smiling. After eight weeks on campus, they not only know about genomes and Chinua Achebe and the philosophy of technology, but have acquired dazzling technique

in poker, and search engines, Nautilus, and fabric softener. This college ordeal, they are beginning to conclude, is not so scary after all."


## Getting In

"On their left was a submarine museum, then a Dunkin' Donuts, then a traffic light. On the right was a group of buildings that looked like a science-fiction penitentiary.



WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY, a sign read, ARTS CENTER."

There's something so eerie about this—a dippy "relationships" novel set in an all-too-nonfictional place. Dylan, his cousin Juddy, their respective dads Ben and Lefty, Lefty's new wife Chloe, her daughter Allison, and assorted friends and foes hop into a Winnebago to do the College Loop together: Yale, Harvard, Bowdoin, Colby, Dartmouth, Middlebury, Williams, Amherst, and finally our beloved sci-fi penitentiary. In between, Dylan falls for Allison, Chloe hates her husband, Allison breaks up with her boyfriend, some guy named Polo gets some sex....oh, hell, I didn't read this for its plot, and neither will anyone who buys it; the only thing keeping this book on the Good Reads lists is its locale name-dropping. I must say the storyline has no personal connection with me, and doesn't remind me of anyone I know, so while I congratulate Boylan on his college

research (he even includes stats from the Insider's Guide '98 at each chapter title page), his writing sucks. Considering his last literary effort has the Aaron Spellington title, *Remind Me to Murder You Later*, this probably shouldn't be surprising. My advice: Check this out from the library, read the section on Wesleyan, laugh, and return it. 

## HERMES VACATION SUGGESTIONS

BY BEN OPPENHEIM

### Spring Break: Nude Olympics in Monticello, FL

Spring break is coming up, and many of you are undoubtedly wondering just what you can do to shake off old man winter. Of course there are the usual options—Cancun, Fort Lauderdale, Miami Beach, etc. But let's be frank—most of us can't afford them, and those at Wesleyan who can don't want to flaunt it.

So ask yourself this: ever gotten naked and then done the pentathlon? On March 21st, you too can be an Olympian—as long as you check your clothes at the door. The Tallahassee Bare Devils will be hosting the fourth annual nude College Greek

Athletic Meet near Monticello, FL. The events are divided into four sections: male and female, athlete and non-athlete (so you won't be completely humiliated on the pole-vault by some budding young Olympian). Registration is at 10AM, and competition begins at 1. There will be a brief information session outlining the events and rules, as well as an informal practice.

Participation costs nothing, although if you just want to go leer for a few hours, it'll cost you \$12. Everyone will be, and must be, naked.

For more information, check out:  
<http://www.freenet.tlh.fl.us/~tbaredev>  
or call (850) 222-1886



# HOOKED ON COLONICS

BY ERIC KUSHINS

A colonic is a 45-minute procedure that cleanses your large intestine by pumping forty gallons of water through your colon. It costs between \$40 and \$75. The cleansing begins as you recline in a plush leather chair with your legs spread. One end of a long tube slips into your poop-chute and the other plugs into a large appliance. Water pumps into your colon. Then they suck fecal matter and toxic cells from the body and collect them in a disposal unit. The tube is transparent, so you can watch what happens—just like TV!

Five, ten, even fifteen pounds of fecal matter have reportedly been removed from individual colons. Some clients have colonics every three weeks—not because they need to, but because they want to be sodomized by a garden hose. On request, some clinics provide “Hooked on Colonics Worked for Me” bumper stickers for preferred customers.


Not everyone agrees about the benefits. Some doctors argue that the liver, kidneys, and intestines are capable of proper digestion and excretion by themselves. Others suggest that colonics “confuse the colon” and may disrupt proper function. Most doctors, however, believe that colonic irrigation does not disturb proper colon functions. Proponents say that our bodies are not capable of handling an “American lifestyle”—fast food, high stress, little sleep, etc. Proper digestive function should include three bowel movements per day (one for each meal).

Colonic supporters argue that Americans need to get their systems in shape. More than 70% of Americans have worms, encrusted fecal matter, and impaction in the colon. Up to 35% of the population has eight pounds of matter lining the colon, and another 35% has five pounds. Visualize for a moment a greenish brown glob of Nickelodeon Gak with protruding hair, worms, and an assortment of other colors and textures growing inside you. Fats, cholesterol, free radicals, and other irritating molecules act as toxins. Toxic dead cells also stick in the colon. These are dysfunctional cells that are saturated with chemicals, dyes, pollution, radiation, etc. (Unconfirmed studies show all these toxins are present in Mocon food). Presently, colon cancer vies with breast and lung cancer for the status of the worst killer in the United States.

Benefits from a colonic include feeling lighter and more energetic, improvement in skin condition, less body odor and bad breath, less belly distension, immune system improvement, restoration of tone, regularity of colon function, a sense of well-being, and the inspiration to take care of yourself.

A colonic should only be administered under certain conditions. You need to be relaxed prior to the procedure. Some clinics offer extras for additional fees. A reflexologist can massage your feet, which has connecting nerves to the intestines, to help relax the colon. After the colonic is taken, you should not eat solid foods for a

day or so to allow the body to detoxify—spending energy normally used on digestion to clear out remaining toxic build-up throughout the body. Fasting, massage, meditation, yoga, and soothing baths are also recommended.

There are benefits from taking a colonic only if you approach the procedure with the right frame of mind. Quick weight-loss is not the purpose of colonic-cleaning. If you choose to take a colonic, you should go into the procedure thinking about changes that could make your lifestyle healthier. After seeing multi-colored fecal matter and toxins removed from your body you should feel obligated to incorporate healthy habits into your life: drink lots of water and eat water-rich foods to cleanse the urinary tract and bowels, eat less meat and more organic fruits and vegetables, eat less high-sugar and high-carbohydrate foods, and create a manageable exercise regimen to keep your body fit. Colonics have gained popularity over the past several years, and it appears that this procedure will continue to lure inquisitive—and in my opinion slightly daring—people to colonic clinics. 

*The unparalleled joys of plunging your ass. Introducing the PPC-101 Colon Hydrotherapy System*



## HERMES VACATION SUGGESTIONS

### Summer Vacation: New Party Internships

For the more politically-minded (and slightly more inhibited) the New Party offers several summer Internships for Social Justice. The New Party, a viable and multi-racial progressive third party alternative, is looking for motivated and active students for an eight-week internship. The internship consists of an intensive three-day seminar on social action and organizing, after which interns go into the field and work with a variety of grass-roots organizations, including groups focusing on campaign finance reform, police accountability, improving the public school system, and environmental work.

The internship pays \$100 a week, and offers both housing and subsidized transportation. Additional need-based scholarships are available, and some interns will receive academic credit for their work. The internships begin in mid-June, and run through mid-August. To apply, email [nmef@igc.org](mailto:nmef@igc.org), or call (718) 694-2928



# Center For The Humanities

Just about every Monday night, professors, some students (who my friends allege to be grievous brown-nosers), and the occasional unknown weird person gather at Russell House to attend the Center for the Humanities lecture series. And OK, so I'm one of those alleged brown-nosers. I don't however, embrace the charge, and I'd like to take this opportunity to tell my friends to go fuck themselves.

The Center for the Humanities holds probably the most regular lecture series on campus, with lectures by faculty fellows who teach only one class during their semester at the Center, but attend all the lectures and colloquia as well as presenting their own work; research fellows, who come to from other institutions for the semester; visiting lecturers; and the Mellon fellow, who stays at the Center for the whole year, teaching one course during that time. Each semester the series has a theme, such as Cultural Constructions of the State, Producing the Past, and, this semester, Discourses of Progress and Development: The Return of Religion. Although the Center's cultural studies focus does mean that very few scientists speak, it is otherwise resolutely interdisciplinary.

LAURA CLAWSON

**All Lectures are Monday Nights at 8:PM in Russell House.  
Colloquia are Tuesday mornings at 10:30 at the Center for the Humanities.**

|                    |                                                                          |                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>February 15</b> | <b>Elizabeth McAlister,<br/>Faculty Fellow.</b>                          | <b>Premodern Anti-Judaism in the Post-modern<br/>Caribbean: 'The Jews,' Jesus and Zombis in Haiti</b>                   |
| <b>February 22</b> | <b>Martin Riesebrodt<br/>(Sociology, University of<br/>Chicago).</b>     | <b>Secularization and the Global Resurgence of<br/>Religion</b>                                                         |
| <b>March 1</b>     | <b>Tessa Bartholomeusz<br/>(Religion, Florida State<br/>University).</b> | <b>Dharma Warriors in Buddhist Sri Lanka</b>                                                                            |
| <b>March 22</b>    | <b>Brian Larkin, Research<br/>Fellow.</b>                                | <b>Mediating the Sacred: Electronic Preaching and<br/>the Transformation of Muslim Identity in<br/>Northern Nigeria</b> |
| <b>March 29</b>    | <b>Ann Pellegrini (English,<br/>Harvard University).</b>                 | <b>Getting Religion and Other Thoughts on<br/>Homosexuality</b>                                                         |
| <b>April 5</b>     | <b>Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi,<br/>Mellon Fellow.</b>                       | <b>Islamism and the Quest for Alternative<br/>Modernities</b>                                                           |
| <b>April 12</b>    | <b>William Pinch, Faculty<br/>Fellow.</b>                                | <b>Killing Ascetics: Godmen and Violence in Indian<br/>History</b>                                                      |
| <b>April 19</b>    | <b>Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi,<br/>Research Fellow.</b>                      | <b>Simulating the Unthinkable: Gaming Nuclear<br/>War in the 1950s</b>                                                  |
| <b>April 26</b>    | <b>David Weisberg, Faculty<br/>Fellow.</b>                               | <b>No Word for Art</b>                                                                                                  |



# Black History Month

Every February, we as a nation recognize the cultural, intellectual, and political achievements of African Americans through Black History Month. Now its in its 67th year, this tradition is being observed with a month-long series of events geared towards awareness and celebration of the black community. Though our production schedule didn't leave us time to print an issue before the month began, here's a list of what's in store for the rest of February.

The following calendar represents a collaboration by students, faculty, and performers in their appreciation of all people of color. Yet, just as important, this collaboration in itself represents the possibilities for all members of Wesleyan's diverse—but often divided—community in supporting each other towards a common goal. Not all participants in these events are of color, nor should all of their attendants be. Wesleyan as a whole, like other communities, must share both the concerns and accomplishments of all of its members in order to effect any real social change. This means extending the awareness and collaboration demonstrated during Black History Month to the remainder of the year.

|                                                 |                                                                                                                                                             |                                         |                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12 Friday<br>7-10 PM<br>MPR                     | Poetry Slam: "DAMN!"<br>featuring Stephanie Renee                                                                                                           | 7:30 and 10 PM<br>CFA Cinema            | 'Amistad' Film Showing                                                                                            |
| 13 Saturday<br>All Day<br>X House Basement      | Workshop: "Black is Beautiful!"<br>Get Ready for the Evening Ahead                                                                                          | 23 Tuesday<br>7 PM<br>MPR Campus Center | Black Male/Female Relationship<br>Dialogue                                                                        |
| Evening<br>Downey House                         | Semiformal: An Evening of<br>Elegance.<br>cost: \$3.00 single/ \$5.00 couple                                                                                | 24 Wednesday<br>9 PM<br>X House         | Forum: Revelations of the Past                                                                                    |
| 14 Sunday<br>10 AM-3 PM<br>X House Basement     | Love Jones Brunch<br>cost varies                                                                                                                            | 7 PM<br>CAAS                            | Public Lecture: Bob Zellner,<br>Former field Secretary for Student<br>Nonviolent Coordinating<br>Committee (SNCC) |
| 15 Monday through<br>18 Thursday<br>CAAS Lounge | Displaying Our Talents:<br>A Showcase of African American<br>Arts & Culture                                                                                 | 25 Thursday<br>7 PM<br>X House          | Discussion: West Indian influ-<br>ences<br>on the Civil Rights Movement                                           |
| 18 Thursday<br>6 PM<br>Location TBA             | Sister Circle:<br>Black Women Dinner and<br>Discussion                                                                                                      | 26 Friday<br>8 PM<br>World Music Hall   | AFRICAN EXPLOSION<br>Dance Performance                                                                            |
| 19 Friday<br>8 PM<br>Crowell Concert Hall       | JUBILEE! Spirit in the Heart of<br>our Ancestors and Our Future<br>A Celebration of Music, Art,<br>Dance and Spoken Word of the<br>Diaspora<br>cost: \$3.00 | Time and Place: TBA                     | Black and Latino Brotherhood Party                                                                                |
| 7:30 and 10 PM<br>CFA Cinema                    | 'Amistad'<br>Film Showing                                                                                                                                   | 27 Saturday<br>3 PM<br>CAAS Lounge      | Career Panel: African Americans in<br>the Corporate World                                                         |
| 10 PM-2 AM<br>X House                           | Jubilee After Party                                                                                                                                         | 28 Sunday<br>11 AM<br>X House Basement  | Gospel Brunch                                                                                                     |
| 20 Saturday<br>7-9 PM<br>Location TBA           | Tribute to African American<br>women                                                                                                                        | Time and Place: TBA                     | Inter Minority Forum                                                                                              |



# EL WES Writes for *Hermes*

EL WES lit up a Lucky Strike without asking and looked at his boss. Oscar Goldman, he knew, was still furious that he had lost his old government job when "The 6 Million dollar Man" was canceled. But why, thought EL WES, between puffs, had the aging Jewish spy come to work here, at Amnesty International? He hadn't even known that the organization dabbled in a hell until they had recruited him out of his small, frighteningly insulated liberal, and started sending him around the world to free political prisoners. It was dangerous but they paid well, and the benefits were good. "Here", said Oscar, handing EL WES a mirror. "This is to celebrate your success in Uganda. Try not to Hoover it all this time." EL WES grinned, it was fun to be a mercenary sometimes.

## Do You?

### Submit!

We encourage all types of submissions: articles on campus, local, or national issues; essays; opinion pieces and editorials; art, short fiction; poetry and much more. We accept writing from students, faculty, alumni/ae, community members, and anyone else. Sorry, we do not accept anonymous submissions.

### Subscribe!

*Hermes* magazine publishes on a monthly basis, usually putting out seven issues during the academic year. Faculty and members of the administration can receive a complimentary subscription delivered to their offices. We also mail issues to subscribers anywhere in the U.S. for a yearly fee of \$10, payable to the W.S.A.

### Join Us!

We need all the help we can get with writing, layout, production, editing, photography, illustration, and everything in between. Send submissions, subscription orders, and correspondence to *Hermes*, c/o W.S.A., Wesleyan Station, Middletown, CT, 06459. You can call us with any questions at 860.685.2426, or fax us at 860.685.2411. E-mail to [hermes@wesleyan.edu](mailto:hermes@wesleyan.edu), and subject it "hermes." Check out our new, improved Web Page: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/hermes/>